

# MONTANA<sup>B2</sup>®

*the magazine of western history*



ONE DOWN, TWO TO GO, famed watercolor by C. M. Russell, painted in 1902.

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## COWBOY AND CATTLEMAN'S ISSUE

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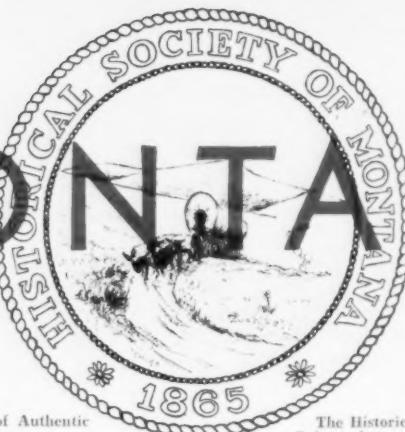


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ABOUT THE COVER—Typical of The Great Cowboy artist, he usually found a title as pungent and as documentary as the art form to which it belonged. This great, action-packed watercolor is no exception. As far as we can ascertain "One Down, Two To Go" has never before been reproduced in color. It was Charley Russell's gift to his friend Sam Wilber, pioneer Great Falls, Montana, transfer and storage man, whose family were fast friends, also. At Wilber's death this 20x28½-inch rangeland depiction became a prized possession of his daughter, Marie, and at her death it passed on to her son, Edward Pearle, having been in the family for more than half a century. Early in 1961 the splendid piece was secured by Mr. T. B. Buchholz of Bradford, Pa., and now it may be seen in the fine collection of The Rockwell Gallery of Western Art, Corning, N. Y. We are deeply obliged to Mr. Robert Rockwell and Mr. Buchholz for their assistance in presenting this to our readers.

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*Our Purpose: To Preserve, Publish, Promote and Perpetuate Western History . . .*

Volume Eleven

Number Four

October, 1961



"THE COWBOY," one of C. M. Russell's great frontier characterizations. We are grateful to *The Great Falls Leader* for permitting its reproduction here.

## COWBOY AND CATTLEMAN'S ISSUE

	Page
CATTLEMAN AND COWBOY: FACT AND FANCY <i>by Lewis Atherton</i>	2
A PICTURE STORY OF MONTANA COWBOY LIFE <i>prepared by the editors</i>	18
THE DAY OF THE CATTLEMEN DAWNED EARLY—IN MONTANA <i>by Robert H. Fletcher</i>	22
THE NEWMAN BROTHERS: FORGOTTEN CATTLE KINGS OF THE NORTHERN PLAINS <i>by Robert H. Burns</i>	28
JOHN BULL IN THE COWMEN'S WEST: MORETON FREWEN <i>by Ernest M. Richardson</i>	37
TEXAS' LARGEST RANCH—IN MONTANA: THE XIT <i>by Joe B. Frantz</i>	46
UP THE TRAIL (AND BACK) IN 1882 <i>by Jack Potter</i>	57
PRELUDE TO THE LAST ROUNDUP: THE DYING DAYS OF THE GREAT 79 <i>by George T. Armitage</i>	66
A NEW FOCUS ON THE SIOUX WAR: BARRIER TO THE CATTLEMAN <i>by Mark H. Brown</i>	76
BOOK REVIEWS <i>edited by Robert G. Athearn</i>	86
THE FUR TRADE by Paul Christer Phillips, reviewed by Merrill J. Mattes; SIERRA RAILWAY by Dorothy Deane Newell, reviewed by Clarence F. McIntosh; MARCH OF THE MONTANA COLUMN by James H. Bradley, edited by Edgar I. Stewart, reviewed by Robert W. Mardock; THE CIVIL WAR IN THE NORTHWEST by Robert Huhs Jones, reviewed by Dudley T. Cornish; THE SAND CREEK MASACRE by Stan Hoig, reviewed by Michael Straight; SOUTH PASS, 1868. JAMES CHISHOLM'S JOURNAL, edited by Lola M. Homsher, reviewed by Rodman Wilson Paul; PAWNEE, BLACKFOOT AND CHEYENNE: HISTORY AND FOLKLORE OF THE PLAINS FROM THE WRITINGS OF GEORGE BIRD GRINNELL, selected and with introduction by Dee Brown, reviewed by W. N. Davis, Jr.; BOOKS ON THE REVIEW EDITOR'S DESK, informal reviews by Robert G. Athearn.	86
BITS FROM THE EDITOR'S MAIL POUCH	94



# Cattleman and Cowboy: Fact and Fancy

by LEWIS ATHERTON

THE COWBOY constitutes the best known and possibly the most significant contribution of the cattle kingdom, and his fame grows even greater as his environmental surroundings recede into history. Ironically, the cattleman rather than the cowboy was the central character on the ranching frontier. Without him, there would have been no cowboys, and he set the bounds within which they lived. Nevertheless, novelists, dramatists, and other practitioners of the arts have generally relegated the rancher to a shadowy background role for the main hero of their imaginative creations, the American cowboy. And yet, what a magnificent cast of characters lies ready at hand for the creative artist! Conrad Kohrs, George W. Littlefield, Shanghai Pierce, Charles Goodnight, Alexander H. Swan, the Lang family, John Chisum, Murdo Mackenzie, the Marquis de Mores, George W. Miller and a host of others were colorful, complicated personalities who deeply impressed contemporary observers.

In contrast, the few novelists using cattlemen as central characters have generally pictured them as wooden types devoid of individuality. In Harold Bindloss' novel, *The Cattle-Baron's Daughter*, written early in the twentieth century, "Torrance, the Cattle-Baron, of Cedar Range" is a stiff-necked, stupid old man who cannot see that nesters are sure to take over his feudal domain. He and his fellow cattlemen use their loyal henchmen, the cowboys, to fight

against the inevitable triumph of agriculture. Bindloss' lone horseman, etched dimly against the horizon, watching the drift of smoke from the iron horse, symbolizes the pitifully noble but arrogant and uncomprehending nature of the cattle barons. Naturally, their passing takes place only after the reader has experienced an overgenerous supply of the drumming, beating, hammering, and thudding of hoofs.<sup>1</sup> The main character of Andy Adams' novel, *Reed Anthony*,

TYPICAL COWBOYS on the N-Bar roundup in 1905 near Grass Range, Mont. (opposite page) contrast sharply with the impeccable PIERRE WIBAUX (right), Eastern Montana cattle king with a French background. The N-Bar photo is by courtesy of Jack Milburn, now general manager of the famed spread once owned by the Newman Brothers, whose little-known story begins on page 28 in this issue.

Cowman, seems little more than a business machine, whose whole interest centers in a constant buying and selling of cattle.<sup>2</sup> Of the two novels, Adams' surpasses Bindloss' by far in veracity, but neither probes successfully the personalities and motivations of cattlemen.

Of more recent vintage, A. B. Guthrie's *These Thousand Hills* portrays the satisfactions of the cattleman's way of life as well as the price paid for these. In this story of the rise of Lat Evans to membership in the Montana ranching fraternity of the 1880's, Guthrie deals with motivations differentiating ranchers from cowboys. Callie Kash, the beauty from the red-light district, whose love Lat turns aside in his drive for power, riches, and respectability, lacks reality, but Guthrie has in general displayed remarkable understanding for that era without typing his characters as symbols rather than flesh-and-blood people.<sup>3</sup> Certainly, Guthrie's novel points the way to a rich vein of literary ore that remains largely unexploited.

There is, of course, an equal paucity of good books on the cowboy, but not from want of hundreds of practitioners who have written what purports to be his story. The market for such material seems insatiable. For instance, Zane Grey, a New York dentist who turned to writing Westerns, produced fifty-four books during his career which sold over fifty million copies and were translated into several foreign languages. Radio and television lean heavily on Western themes, with cowboys as central characters. Basketball and baseball games alone have surpassed rodeos in recent years in attendance figures. Indeed, the

<sup>1</sup> Harold Bindloss, *The Cattle-Baron's Daughter* (New York, 1906).

<sup>2</sup> Andy Adams, *Reed Anthony, Cowman: An Autobiography* (Boston, 1907).

<sup>3</sup> Alfred B. Guthrie, *These Thousand Hills* (Boston, 1956).



cowboy theme is so popular in modern-day culture that it needs no documentary proof.

In reality, the cowboy's life involved so much drudgery and loneliness and so little in the way of satisfaction that he drank and caroused to excess on his infrequent visits to the shoddy little cowtowns that dotted the West. A drifter whose work and economic status made it difficult for him to marry and rear a family, he sought female companionship among prostitutes. Most of his physical dangers scarcely bordered on the heroic, necessary as they were in caring for other men's cattle, and they served primarily to retire him from cowpunching, not to glorify his career. Older men could not endure the rigors of such a life, the major reason for the youthfulness of the group. In the true economic sense, rank-and-file cowboys were hired hands on horseback, and very unromantic ones at that. Realistic observers during the cowboy era agreed with Bruce Siberts'

Lewis Atherton, a native of Bosworth, Missouri, has been on the history faculty at the University of Missouri at Columbia for 25 years, serving presently as professor of history as well as director of the Western Historical Manuscripts Collection. Dr. Atherton's searching appraisal of the cattleman and cowboy is a chapter from his distinguished new book, "The Cattle Kings," to be published in November by the Indiana University Press. We are grateful to the author and publishers for allowing us this pre-publication privilege.

Dr. Atherton, who was a Guggenheim Fellow in 1941-42 and a Newberry Library Fellow in 1950-51, is the author of three previous books: "Pioneer Merchant in Mid-America," 1939; "The Southern Country Store, 1800-1860," 1949, and "Main Street on the Middle Border," 1954, as well as numerous articles on historical subjects. He is a member of the board of editors of "Mississippi Valley Historical Review" and "Agricultural History."



JOHN SLAUGHTER, Texas-bred cowman and Indian fighter, became Arizona's famed "sheriff of Cochise County." A cattle baron in the great tradition, he established the 100,000-acre San Bernardino Ranch near Douglas, Arizona, which he bossed until his death at 81 in 1922.  
(Lea McCarty portrait.)

evaluation. While living in the Dakotas in the 1890's as a cowhand and small rancher, Siberts concluded that most of the old time cowhands were a scrubby lot, and that many of them suffered with a dose of the clap or pox: "Only the few good ones got into the cow business and made good."<sup>4</sup>

Siberts was speaking of the rank-and-file cowboys, for he and other observers did see individuals who measured up to Owen Wister's famous character, the Virginian, who came to personify the cowboy in American imagination. But, of course, Wister had his hero marry the schoolteacher, accept a foreman's job, and obviously move in the direction of becoming a rancher on his own. Ordinary cowhands simply lacked the traits out of which national heroic types could be expected to emerge. And yet, the cowboy became an American hero.

Since the gaucho, a South American counterpart of the American cowboy, achieved an equally exalted status in the minds of later generations, one is tempted to seek an explanation inherent in frontier conditions. After the gaucho helped liberate the Plata lands from Spanish rule, the gaucho theme blossomed into one of Hispanic America's contributions to world art, literature, and music. As one authority has pointed out, Latin Americans honor the gaucho as settler of the wilderness, soldier de-

fender, and conqueror of the Indian. They praise him as a hide collector, for many generations the source of the Argentine's economic life. Although much of the gaucho literature is trash, this same authority pays tribute to the poesy of the Santos Vega theme, the quaintness of the gaucho folk song and dance, the dry humor of riddle and proverb, and the realism of such descriptions of pastoral life as are found in Ascacubi's *Santos Vegas*. Through accounts of gaucho life and literature, the Plata peoples have come to accept certain ideals as their own: independent self-sufficiency, stoic courage, and pride in worthy national achievement. In actuality, however, the gaucho was a colonial bootlegger of hides and of exceedingly low social status, first despised and then feared by the upper classes as he grew in numbers. How he became the symbol of the dashing cavalryman, the successful lover, the singing minstrel of the plains, and the noble defender of the poor<sup>5</sup> constitutes as fascinating a riddle as explaining the rise of his North American brother, the cowboy, to an equally exalted status.

The answer does not lie in universal, mystical frontier influences. No such class developed out of the Boer economy on the South African frontier, perhaps because the Boers used native herdsmen. In Australia, shepherds and hut-keepers lived a monotonous existence looking after flocks of sheep for wealthy owners, and sought forgetfulness of such drudgery in the same careless squandering of their earnings that characterized American cowboys. There were also second-generation boys from small settlers' families whose horsemanship and familiarity with the bush country fitted them for more exciting tasks than herding sheep. They became the drovers, bullock-drivers, and horse-breakers, and their lives paralleled most

ABEL H. "SHANGHAI" PIERCE, born in Rhode Island, became one of Texas' richest cattle barons after he bought 7,000 cattle during the panic of 1873. Noted for his booming voice, Pierce was frank in proclaiming his vow to become a rich man, despite lawsuits and many claims that he started and maintained his empire with unbranded mavericks.

(Lee McCarty portrait.)

closely of all that of the American cowboy. Apparently, however, they were more inclined to marry and settle down in their own districts after a few years of wandering.<sup>6</sup> There were also "lawless bushrangers" who managed to carry on their depredations because of frontier conditions,<sup>7</sup> and who seemingly had many characteristics in common with desperadoes on the American frontier. And yet, Australia seems not to have centered attention on such groups, leaving to the United States and South America the deification of the horsemen of the plains.

That process within the United States lacks any tangible or easily seen key, such as the important boost to his popularity which the gaucho received through participation in the wars of liberation. Cause and effect in the story of the American cowboy's rise to fame cannot be sharply separated, although plausible explanations abound. Why, for instance, should an employee of a conservatively inclined rancher become a symbol of freedom and individualism? Possibly an emphasis on a philosophy of live and let live, which characterized the ranching frontier, accounts for that seemingly incongruous development. Social restraints rested lightly on a land where acreage far outnumbered population, where the cosmopolitan background of inhabitants necessitated recognition of the right of others to self-expression, and where a desire to make money or to live from day to day—depending on whether one wanted to be a rancher or a cowboy—encouraged individualistic expression more than if the inhabitants had been trying to create a Utopian society. Perhaps

<sup>6</sup> Walker D. Wayman, recorder, *Nothing But Prairie & Sky* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1954), p. 101.

<sup>7</sup> Madaline W. Nichols, *The Gaucho: Cattle Hunter, Cavalryman, Ideal of Romance* (Durham, North Carolina, 1942).

<sup>8</sup> Edward Shann, *An Economic History of Australia* (Cambridge, England, 1930), Chapter 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 216-217.



the growing distrust of big business in the late nineteenth century prevented the rancher from achieving heroic stature. Instead, the public thought of him as a cattle king, who, like his fellow moguls elsewhere, oppressed the little fellow, in his case the squatters or homesteaders who competed with him for land and water rights. And so the cowboy became the hero.

In achieving that status he passed through a variety of interpretations at the hands of the dime novelists, whose mass audience could make of him a folk hero. Apparently, there was no "typical" cowboy dime novel but rather a progression in interpretation toward the position ultimately held. Joseph E. Badger, one of the earlier dime novelists, would have completely baffled modern-day readers of pulp literature by refusing to type his characters. His heroes often had faults; his villains were not wholly bad. If his point of view had prevailed over the years, the quality of cowboy literature would have improved immeasurably. Another dime novelist, Captain Frederick Whittaker, condemned the cowboy as a reversion to primitive man in a lawless West. Since Whittaker served in the Union army during the Civil War, memories of that conflict may well have influenced his interpretation of Texas cowboys. To him, the cowboy was no folk



THE VIRGINIAN, as interpreted in 1929 by the late Gary Cooper, was the hero of Owen Wister's famous novel which typified the American cowboy as a quiet-spoken lover of horses, defender of womanhood, and well able to hold his own in the best of company.

(New York Public Library photo.)

hero. Colonel Prentiss Ingraham supposedly wrote more dime novels than any other man, more than one hundred on Buffalo Bill's exploits alone. His cowboys embodied the same traits as all his other heroes: blood would tell. In his books cowboy heroes exemplified the medieval tradition of knight-errantry—heroes who spent their time redressing wrongs and protecting the weak. That interpretation has never quite passed away. The elevation of the cowboy from a subordinate role to the central spot in stories, however, and from vilification to heroism, achieved fullest expression in the writings of William G. Patten, probably the most glib of all dime novelists. Patten pictured cowboys as men of action and as nature's noblemen. Thus, briefly put, the dime novelists moved through a series of stages to a final deification of the cowboy—from cowboys as morally unpredictable to cowboys as depraved, to cowboys as moral defenders of a transplanted medieval tradition, and to cowboys as nature's noblemen.<sup>8</sup>

In 1902 Owen Wister wrote *The Virginian*, the most famous of all cowboy novels, and thereby gave concrete expression to a legend for a host of readers. The novel went through fifteen

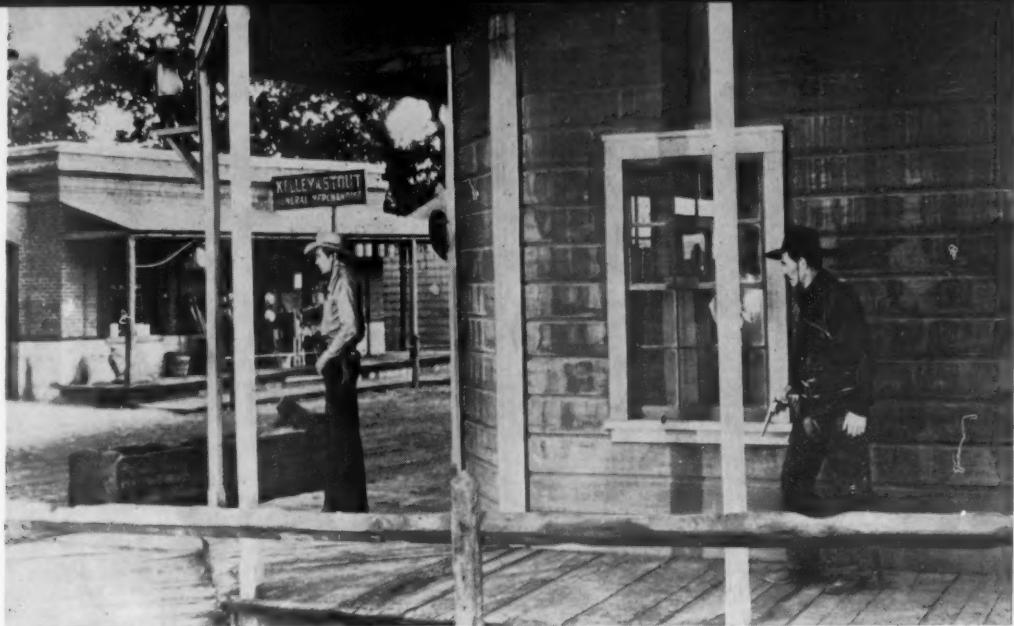
printings its first year and as late as 1924 rated eighth on a reader survey to pick the ten best books published since 1900.<sup>9</sup> Wister graduated from Harvard Law School in 1888 but found it both necessary and pleasant to spend much time in the West because of his health. Having hunted and rambled from Washington Territory to the state of Texas, he knew much of the West firsthand, and for him it had an enduring charm.

Wister's *Virginian* typified the better grade of cowboy. He was a slim young giant, reticent to strangers, given to swearing, a practical joker, sang off-color songs, loved his horse dearly, and easily won the favors of women of frail virtue. He had never begged nor stolen, and he defended the purity of womanhood and the rights of the downtrodden. One could approach him only on the basis of equality because he was subservient to no man. There was also the schoolmarm from Vermont whose ancestry traced back to the American Revolution and whose family thought of cowboys as inferior beings. Although at first she ignored the *Virginian*, she soon sensed his innate greatness of mind and character. By studying the books which she loaned him, he became her equal in the literary arts. But only his rich endowments of heart and soul could have made him the rewarding companion that he proved to be when it came to discussing Shakespeare and Browning, the *Virginian* being the first man in the schoolmarm's life with sufficient insight to point out possible flaws in her favorite poet, Browning.

Basically, of course, the *Virginian* was a man of action, and the story

\* Warren French, "The Cowboy in the Dime Novel," *Studies in English*, University of Texas (Austin, 1951), XXX, 219-234.

\* "Choosing the Century's Favorite Books: Final Results of a Nation-Wide Poll," *The Literary Digest International Book Review*, II (March, 1924), 261-264.



THE EVIL TRAMPAS, played by the late Walter Houston, stalks the hero in this scene from "The Virginian." The fact that he was forced to eliminate this wholly vile man added to the heroic stature of The Virginian.

(New York Public Library photo.)

reached its peak in his classic gun battle with his mortal enemy, Trampas, on the very eve of his wedding. But Wister made it clear that such violence on the part of the Virginian arose only from the necessity of the environment in which he lived, not from personal preference. His skill with the six-shooter gave him no hankering to build a reputation as a gunslinger. The schoolmarm's Eastern relatives had to recognize the greatness of such a man, and, by implication, so did all other Easterners. Sired in old Virginia, winner of the hand of a Vermont descendant of Revolutionary War heroes, and master of every challenge posed by America's last great land frontier, the Virginian could well expect every man to obey when he uttered his famous warning, "When you call me that, smile."

Of course, the American cowboy was already undergoing a process of glorification when Wister wrote his novel, and its mass appeal only strengthened and shaped that trend. Over the years, the cowboy has become America's folk hero in a particularly intimate and unique sense, and one can only speculate as to the factors involved in that development.

Part of the explanation may lie in the cowboy's nameless state. Observers like Theodore Roosevelt described ranchers as far more individualistic than cowboys in personality and background. Some spoke of "good" and "bad" cowboys, but beyond that generalized classification they seemed unable to go. On the other hand, virtually any schoolboy can name Daniel Boone as the symbol of the wilderness Indian fighter, Mike Fink and Davy Crockett as kings of the wild frontier, and Paul Bunyan as hero of the lumber camps. All of these characters, except possibly Boone, have been raised to the stature of Beowulfs of old—folk heroes, yes, but credited with feats that put them above the emulation of mortal man. But who is the great American cowboy? In answer, one must recognize that he continues to be a composite of many men, a nameless hero in recognition of the fact that his deeds were not beyond the powers of virtually anyone willing to exert his energies. His feats were great but not miraculous, and Americans have been reluctant to endow him with a superhuman personality. As a hero of the American folk, he is truly all of them in one.

Of course, there is Pecos Bill, "the greatest cowboy of all time," who was raised by the coyotes, gentled the wonder-horse Pegasus, established the perpetual-motion ranch and performed other truly miraculous feats. Supporters identify him as the American cowboy and claim that stories attached to his mythical name were actually told by cowboys during their contests to produce the biggest yarn of all. Some stories may well have originated in that manner. To a considerable extent, however, Pecos Bill is the creation of writers who seem to feel that the cattle kingdom must have a character comparable to Mike Fink or Paul Bunyan, although a true folk hero needs no press agent to trumpet his claims.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps that explains why Pecos Bill has never quite caught on, charming and illuminating as some of his mythical exploits are.

Perhaps the cowboy became famous partially because he reached his peak at a proper time to be canonized as a folk hero. In the 1890's commentators everywhere were beginning to worry about the disappearance of land frontiers. In Europe, advocates of the new school of geopolitics talked about the doctrine of "closed space" and how countries should reshape their policies according to that concept. In America, Frederick Jackson Turner spoke of the end of free land and cited the census of 1890 as proof that frontier days were gone. In Turner's opinion, the American frontier had created many of our prized values, democracy, individualism, and so on, and its disappearance boded ill for the future. Still another observer, Alfred Thayer Mahan, in *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, urged fellow Americans to become strong on the sea and to seek out new frontiers in the Far East. Average citizens recognized that the old days of great open spaces were passing away and thus felt hemmed in for all time to come by cities and factories. Railroad connections with the West still made it easy for travelers crossing the plains to ob-

serve cowboys at work. Such a startling contrast to their own existence increased their inclination to believe that worries never existed in the simple and uncomplicated life of the range. The fears thus engendered by a rapidly burgeoning industrial and urban age encouraged people to idealize the life of the American cowboy.

Moreover, as the last representatives of the westward movement, cowboys gained in stature by becoming something of a composite of all preceding frontiersmen. On TV today they fight Indians just as Daniel Boone did, hunt for lost mines as once did the prospectors, and even trap furs in the tradition of the mountain men. They belonged to "outfits," which exemplified many of the characteristics of youth. Those small, closely knit groups of young males emphasized gang loyalties rather than more mature social relationships. Thus, they came to personify all the past youth of the American nation, an essential characteristic of the folk hero, who must come from an earlier and idealized period.

Changes in literary conventions also gave the cowboy a greater role than heroes of earlier frontiers. As Henry Nash Smith has so well pointed out, class traditions governing the pre-Civil War genteel novel required the hero to be an upper-class person exemplifying the virtues of civilization, which supposedly surpassed those of more primitive societies.<sup>11</sup> Thus, Uncas in Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* and his faithful friend Leatherstocking could not hope to win the hand of a beautiful girl whom they rescued from a fate worse than death. In the background, Cooper maintained a shadowy aristocrat who in the end married the girl, although his futile ways on the frontier where the story took place proved that he did not deserve her. By the time the cowboy reached his peak, literary traditions had changed. Edward Eggle-

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, James Cloyd Bowman, *Pecos Bill: The Greatest Cowboy of All Time* (Chicago, 1950), for representative stories concerning Pecos Bill.

<sup>11</sup> Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: the American West as symbol and myth* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1950).

OWEN WISTER, Harvard man who spent much of his life in the West for reasons of health. In 1922 he wrote "The Virginian," most famous of all cowboy novels and still widely read. It unquestionably established much of the "hero" stereotype for the American cowboy.  
(University of Wyoming photo.)

ton, Hamlin Garland, and others developed a more realistic attitude toward society. In the leading cowboy novel, *The Virginian*, the hero married the heroine, and thus suffered no diminution in the minds of readers. The cowboy might not choose to marry, but literary convention no longer blocked his range of choice as it had for many of his frontier predecessors.

Moreover, the cowboy demands little cerebration on the part of his admirers. Most stories concerning him emphasize action rather than subtle character analysis, thus posing few problems for readers. They constitute escape literature for many people, a way of getting free from conventional patterns and problems of living. And, again, they represent a simple formula of good versus evil without any shading in between. A noted theologian who is addicted to reading Westerns has explained his interest in exactly those terms:

If just once I could stand in the dust of the frontier main street facing an indubitably bad man who really deserved extermination, and with smoking six-gun actually exterminate him—shoot him once and see him drop dead. Just once to face real and unqualified evil, plug it and see it drop. . . .<sup>12</sup>

Those who struggle hardest to destroy evil, and yet find it difficult because they injure the good in the same action, may well indeed find release from their frustration in the cowboy Western. When the Virginian killed Trampas, he eliminated a wholly evil man.

In usurping the center of the stage from his employer, the rancher, the cowboy has become a folk hero, but his victory has imprisoned him in the formula that necessarily applies to such a character. In reality, the cowboy would make an inadequate hero for the yet-to-be-written great novel on American ranching, even could he break the bonds that imprison him. In many respects, his career consisted of running



away from life or of adjusting to it at the lowest common denominator. The cattleman, with all his faults, provides better insight into the motivations, struggles, defeats, and triumphs that constituted life in the cattle kingdom.

Nevertheless, the highly popular Western continues to repeat its well-known formula. A critic has outlined the characteristics of such a story, elements of which extend back to the 1880's, and suggests that the rules for its composition are almost as clearly defined as those for writing French tragedy in the seventeenth century. Such a story must stress high moral standards, in spite of superficial deviations from conventional behavior, and must rigidly classify its characters as "good" or "bad." It must express a romantic and chivalrous attitude toward women. It must involve an abundance of action: shooting or killing; lynching or near lynching; crime or attempted crime; conspiracy of the bad against the good, with the latter winning the final victory. It must have a noble heroine, duped to side temporarily with the villain but turning in the end to the noble hero, a man of superior strength, skill, honesty, and courage.<sup>13</sup> Such plots revolve around a variety of topics: cattle feuds; conflicts involving sheepherders, Indians, and homesteaders; disputed titles to ranches or mines; railroad rivalries; attempts of crooks to cheat innocent white owners, Indians, or the government; efforts to identify and punish cattle thieves and other desperadoes;

<sup>12</sup> Armand W. Reeder, "Roundup of Westerns," St. Louis *Post Dispatch*, book page, June 1, 1958.

<sup>13</sup> Irene P. McKeahan, writing in Junius Henderson, et al., *Colorado: Studies of Its Past and Present* (Boulder, Colorado, 1927), p. 163, cited in Percy S. Fritz, *Colorado: The Centennial State* (New York, 1941), p. 420.

and exposure and punishment of corrupt government officials. Writers like Zane Grey, who remained most faithful to the formula, found ready sale for their work, but they also failed to produce literature of a high order.

Some practitioners have shown a superior craftsmanship and sufficient insight to lift them well above the level of much that passes for Western literature. O. Henry and Hamlin Garland tried their hands at Western stories with a fair measure of literary success. Among those who centered their attention more fully on Western themes, Eugene Manlove Rhodes and Owen Wister, produced stories that far surpassed the usual run of such literature in their day, and Wister's *The Virginian* achieved a fine sales record as well. More recently, writers like Dorothy Scarborough, Conrad Richter, Tom Lea, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, Jack W. Schaefer, and A. B. Guthrie have demonstrated superior skill in overcoming the handicaps placed on creative writers by the time-honored formula governing the production of Westerns.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, any creative writer who dares to tamper with the formula faces considerable peril because of its association with the cowboy folk hero. Even the critic can expect little mercy for daring to point out the unrealistic nature of much that passes for Western literature. The intensity of feeling surrounding the whole subject found ample expression in a controversy involving Emerson Hough's popular novel, *North of 36*, which appeared in 1923. Born in Newton, Iowa, Hough taught school and took a law degree at the University of Iowa before transferring to New Mexico in the early 1880's. In 1897 he published *The Story of the Cowboy*, the outgrowth of his interest in Western life. Although well received, it achieved much less popularity than his later novels, such as *North of 36*. The latter story appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, in book form, and as a motion picture produced by Paramount Studios. No author could wish for more in the



EMERSON HOUGH, lawyer-turned-author. His novel, "North of 36," brought on a nationwide storm when criticized by Stuart Henry. Born in 1857 in Newton, Iowa, Hough, after receiving his law degree from the University of Iowa, moved to the "half cowtown and half mining camp" of Whiteoaks, N. Mex. He spent the winter of 1895 in Yellowstone Park and was instrumental in the enactment of laws protecting buffalo and other wildlife in national parks. A passionate conservationist, Hough was a prolific writer of articles and novels on Western subjects. Another of his popular novels filmed by Hollywood was the famed "Covered Wagon," written in 1922.

(Iowa History and Archives Photo.)

way of general public recognition.

Hough's plot concerned the driving of a herd of cattle from Texas to Abilene, Kansas, in 1867, and included a generous amount of violent action, as well as the beautiful heroine, Taisie Lockhart, who accompanied her loyal cowboys on their hazardous trip. In explaining his intentions in regard to the story, Hough wrote on April 20, 1923:

Of course, you know that in writing such a book as "North of 36", we are dealing with fiction absolutely and the characters are all strictly imaginary as well as most of the incidents. All I can attempt to do is to give general fidelity to the historical facts of that long-ago period, without claiming to write history at all. Indeed history is rather dull reading, don't you think?<sup>15</sup>

In November, 1923, *The Literary Digest International Book Review* printed a review of *North of 36* by Stuart Henry under the caption "Faults of our Wild West Stories." Henry opened on

<sup>14</sup> Joe B. Frantz and Julian Ernest Choate, Jr., *The American Cowboy: The Myth and the Reality* (Norman, Oklahoma, 1955), gives a fuller appraisal of cowboy literature.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Stuart Henry, *Conquering Our Great American Plains: A Historical Development* (New York, 1930), p. 354.

<sup>16</sup> Stuart Henry, "Faults of Our Wild West Stories," *The Literary Digest International Book Review*, I (November, 1923), 34-35.



STUART HENRY, whose critical review of Emerson Hough's "North of '36" generated widespread rebuttal, is pictured at his graduation from the University of Kansas in 1881. His later writings indicated he had something less than admiration for his boyhood Abilene, Kansas home, which he abandoned soon after graduation for study in Europe and life in New York City.

(University of Kansas photo.)

a favorable note by commenting that readers of Hough's *The Covered Wagon* could now enjoy this new story of Taisie Lockhart and her cowboys and 4500 steers:

As a thriller, none but fair and complimentary words can be said for this last romance of Mr. Hough's. It has all the tearing action provided by hostile Indians, raging floods, cattle-stam-pedes, fatal contests with pistols, rough cow-punchers on woolly mustangs, and a conventional Mary Pickford love-story developed amid the excitements and spectacular hardships of a long cattle drive.<sup>16</sup>

But then, stimulated in part by a prefatory note to the book and comments on the jacket that it intended to give the coloring and "feel" of actual existence — to pen the essential truth, Henry opened a barrage of adverse criticism:

Yet, after all merited praise is awarded, may not one protest against the giving-out of the idea that such narratives reflect the real history and life of the West that was?

In his opinion, the book suffered from faulty chronology and factual distortions, examples of which he listed at considerable length.

As a historical romance, however, Hough's book suffered most grievously from following the usual Western formula in which characters were so

strongly typed as to lose individuality. It was little more than the usual account of the "good" guys versus the "bad," with the good, of course, winning out. But Henry was more concerned with truth in its literal form. He criticized the language spoken by the characters in the book as a mixture of earlier and latter-day forms. Most of all,

Gloss and glamour can not well be harmonized with the grim life of these wiry frontiersmen of the cattle camp and "prairie schooner." They were gaunt, homely, hungry, leading a rawbone and rawhide existence. Many excellent traits had they, but their life was necessarily hard, even to sordidness. They and their few women-folk furnished figures too weazened, weary, forlorn, for the buoyant pages of adolescent pageantry. They would not feel at home in the West that Mr. Hough depicts.

The editors of the magazine must have considered Henry highly competent to review Hough's book, both from historical background and literary experience. Born at Clifton Springs, New York, in 1860, he moved to Abilene, Kansas, in 1868 at the age of seven, his older brother having preceded him and the rest of the family there in 1867. Young Stuart saw at first hand the great days of the Texas-Abilene cattle trade, and his brother, Theodore, served as the town's first mayor. Stuart took A.B. and M.A. degrees at the University of Kansas, and then studied for six years in Germany and Italy, and at the Sorbonne. In later years, his business interests kept him in touch with both Eastern and Western sections of the country, although he resided at the Century Club in New York City. He also wrote a number of books praising French and Continental society: *Paris Days and Evenings*, 1896; *Hours With Famous Parisians*, 1897; *Romance of a French Salon*, 1903; and *French Essays and Profiles*, 1921.<sup>17</sup>

But Henry "placed his powder on a stove," according to George W. Saunders of the Old Time Trail Drivers' Association, when he dared to criticize

<sup>17</sup> Biographical details concerning Henry's life have been drawn from the sketch of him in *Who's Who in America for 1924-25* and from autobiographical statements in Henry's *Conquering Our Great American Plains*.

Hough's book. Saunders solicited rebuttals from a wide variety of sources, and these appeared in *The Pioneer Magazine of Texas* over a period of several months in 1924.<sup>18</sup> Saunders himself wrote a vehement denunciation of Henry's criticisms, including evidence of the historical soundness of Hough's story. His ire surpassed all bounds, however, when he spoke of Henry's characterization of the people involved in Hough's book as wizened, gaunt, and homely. That "stupendous Parisian ass," said Saunders, must have been reared in a hothouse not to understand the deeper and finer emotions that were the birthright of people of the open, of God's own. Their womenfolk were daughters of proud Virginia ancestors. Because they did not drink bootleg whiskey, use rouge to attract the kisses of libertines, indulge in cigarettes and promiscuous cursing, and bore children instead of poodle dogs and monkeys, they appeared hideous to perverted critics like Henry.

John R. Blocker, a participant in the long drives, also testified to the authenticity of Hough's books. The Abilene dance halls were as he described them, and, if Henry could have seen (as he apparently did) lean, hungry cowboys in those dance halls, he would not have thought of them as weary and wizened and forlorn. Moreover, Henry's strictures on Wild Bill Hickok failed to credit him with killing off the worst characters and of making as good a marshal as times and conditions allowed.

The Honorable E. C. Little, congressman from Kansas, who spent his childhood in Abilene in the early 1870's along with Henry, and who, having visited Paris, felt as well qualified as Henry to judge degrees of civilization, entered the fray with a letter stating that he remembered one Abilene mother and her four daughters who easily ranked with anyone that he or Henry ever saw in Paris. He especially deplored Henry's comment that frontier life was so grim as to approach sordidness. Instead of memories of wizened

and weary people, he recalled the bright, bold, fearless, adventurous boys, and the sweet, fearless, rosy and fragrant girls of his youth. He was indeed sorry that Henry did not remember things as they were in that fairyland of adventure and romance, of stirring events and stirring men:

When all the world was young,  
lad,  
And all the trees were green,  
And all the geese were swans,  
lad,  
And every lass a queen.

But Henry, unfortunately, preferred to pick his heroes and heroines from dusty theatres and soiled drawing rooms of the French capital.

Western authors also testified to the general soundness of Hough's novel. William MacLeod Raine, Andy Adams, and Charles Siringo, for instance, commented on its historical spirit or offered bits of evidence to bolster its reputation. Even more impressive were the comments of Philip Ashton Rollins because of his geographical background and honors. In June, 1924, Princeton University, his alma mater, conferred an honorary degree upon him for distinguished legal work and for showing that the "making and blending" of the West from the Missouri river to the Californian mountains was largely done by cowboys, that virile race of tireless horsemen. As a result of having resided in the cattle kingdom for a time in the 1880's, Rollins wrote what he called an unconventional history of civilization on the old-time cattle range. As a Princeton man and an Easterner, honored by Princeton for his cowboy writings, he was living proof that even Ivy League circles revered the cowboy tradition in American culture. In a letter on July 4, 1924, Independence Day, Rollins assured the editor of *The Pioneer Magazine of Texas* that every patriotic American owed him and George W. Saunders a debt of gratitude for their "virile" refutation of Stuart Henry's libel against the pioneers of Texas and

the West. According to Rollins, if those pioneers were wizened, so were the men who fought the French and Indians, many members of the Continental Congress, many of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and all of Washington's soldiers at Valley Forge.

Walter Prescott Webb of the University of Texas, who ultimately rose to the presidency of the American Historical Association, also affirmed the over-all soundness of Hough's book insofar as the spirit of history was concerned and rebutted a number of Henry's specific historical criticisms.<sup>19</sup> On June 7, 1924, a *Saturday Evening Post* editorial praised Emerson Hough and his supporters,<sup>20</sup> thereby greatly increasing the volume of criticism of Stuart Henry's point of view. *The Literary Digest International Book Review*, in which Henry's review had appeared, also took cognizance of the storm of controversy. In its July, 1924, issue, it cited some of the criticism of Henry, including one of Congressman Little's questions that he at least must have considered strictly rhetorical, "How could a man who wants to write books leave Abilene and go to Paris looking for adventures and romance and wonderful people?" The article lamely concluded that two things were evident after the "Texans" got through with Henry: *The International Book Review* was widely read in that part of the country, and Hough's novels were highly esteemed as history by men whose early life they depicted.<sup>21</sup>

In 1930 Stuart Henry published his last book, *Conquering Our Great American Plains*, an appraisal of the early history of Abilene and of the West as he recalled it. The book made it abundantly clear that he still held the point of view expressed in his earlier review of Hough's story, and contained additional evidence to substantiate his position.

<sup>18</sup> *The Pioneer Magazine of Texas*, V (April through September, 1924).

<sup>19</sup> The comments by all the people cited appeared in *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> "Texas Versus Henry," *The Saturday Evening Post*, CXCVI (June 7, 1924), 34.

<sup>21</sup> "The Old-Time Cowboys Defend Emerson Hough," *The Literary Digest International Book Review*, II (July, 1924), 602 and 615.

<sup>22</sup> Henry, *Conquering Our Great American Plains*, p. 167.

tion. Even the most casual reading of the book will convince most students that Henry developed a marked distaste for Abilene during his childhood. He and his family disliked the hellfire sermons preached in its earliest church, although they supported religion as a civilizing force. Henry vividly recalled the cruelty involved in crowding Texas longhorns into inadequately equipped cattle cars for their trip to the slaughterhouse. The dirty, drab, provincial aspects of early pioneering disgusted Henry, who had no desire to be a cowboy or to conquer the West by brawn alone. Nor did conditions improve overnight:

This dickering, swapping, spread eagle species of frontier Yankee was the natural successor to the talkative species of first squatters on that border—the latter accustomed to sun themselves while chockfull of opinions as to all they had "seed an' heard" and vociferous about the "mighty" curious country where they had now "tied up at."<sup>22</sup>

In the controversy over Hough's book, both sides displayed a marked sensitivity concerning the standing of American culture. Some looked to other cultures for the highest values; others fiercely proclaimed the supremacy of our own. That attitude has accounted in considerable part for the low quality of cowboy literature. The harshness of frontier life repels some authors, and they look elsewhere for themes. Others glorify that epoch out of all proportion. Those who would like to depict it without apology or defense hesitate because of the danger of cruel attack from one or the other of the extreme poles of feeling. And so, the formula writing continues, ignored by those interested in human personality rather than stereotypes, and proclaimed by those who glamorize our past or prefer a story that imposes few demands on their thinking.

In addition to the great quantity of novels and short stories featuring the cowboy theme, there are many supposedly sober accounts of cowboy life written by actual participants or first-hand observers. Some of them, like



CHARLES SIRINGO, right, the self-styled Pinkerton-type detective who wrote of his exploits via paperback books, is pictured with early cowboy hero, William S. Hart, in the 1920's. The picture, taken on a Hollywood Western movie set, is reproduced by courtesy of the Kansas Historical Society.

Hough's *Story of the Cowboy* and, best of all, Andy Adams' *Log of a Cowboy* provide a good picture of that bygone era. Even the best, however, suffer from an overly descriptive approach and a concern with minute matters. They debate whether cowboys carried one gun or two; whether they named their horses or not; whether they valued their horse or their saddle most of all; whether they preferred bright colors, and so on.

Still less rewarding, however, are those books turned out by participants and observers of frontier days who embroidered or modified truth in the interest of attracting a large reading audience. In that field, Charley Siringo won much attention. In 1912, for instance, one of his paperbacks bore the title *A Cowboy Detective. A True Story of Twenty-two Years with a World-Famous Detective Agency* [The Pinkerton, thinly disguised]. *Giving the Inside Facts of the Bloody Couer d'Alene Labor Riots, and the many Ups and Downs of the Author throughout the United States, Alaska, British Columbia and Old Mexico. Also Exciting Scenes*

*among Moonshiners of Kentucky and Virginia.* By Charles A. Siringo, Author of "A Texas Cowboy." Those interested in obtaining a copy were invited to get in touch with Siringo at Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he was residing. Quite obviously, Siringo had come a long way from his earlier cowpunching days. By claiming to have been a secret employee of the Pinkerton agency, he could assert that he had participated in everything from searching out cattle thieves to trapping moonshiners in Virginia. Such were the devices to which authors of his type resorted.

The ranching frontier also influenced American life through its cowboy songs. Cowboys sang to the herds of cattle on long drives and at roundup time as a means of calming them and of lessening the danger of stampedes. They also sang of evenings in the bunkhouse or around the campfire for entertainment. Even the lonely chore of line-riding could be eased by singing to one's self the ballads popular in the particular region where a cowboy happened to be employed.

ZANE GREY, dentist-turned-author, became the most widely read of all Western novelists, a total of at least 11,000,000 copies of his books being sold before his death in 1939. Born in Zanesville, Ohio, in 1875, he graduated from dental college in 1898 but never made a success in that profession. He turned to writing—unsuccessfully at first—but in 1912 he wrote "Riders of the Purple Sage," which was to sell 1,800,000 copies.

(Harpers, Publishers, photo.)

Fortunately, collectors began to assemble and preserve such songs while many old-time cowhands were still alive. In 1910, for instance, John A. Lomax published the first edition of his *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads*, which was reprinted and enlarged over the years. The story of the most famous of all cowboy songs, "Home on the Range," provides a fascinating illustration of how such contributions were preserved and grew in popularity. As John A. Lomax tells the story:

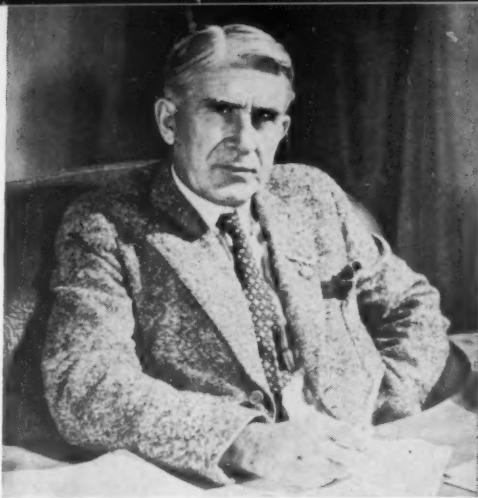
Some one told me that in San Antonio, Texas, lived a Negro singer and cook, who had first plied the latter art in the rear of a chuck wagon which followed many a herd of long-horned cattle up the trail from Texas to Fort Dodge, Kansas. I found him in 1908 leaning against a stunted mulberry tree at the rear of his place of business, a low drinking dive.

"I'm too drunk to sing today. Come back tomorrow," he muttered.

On the following morning among other songs he gave me the words and tune of "Home on the Range." Both the words and the tune sung today were first printed in the 1910 edition of "Cowboy Songs," and attracted no attention for nearly twenty years. Then two sheet-music arrangements—one pirated—helped the tune to a radio audience. Lawrence Tibbett and other singers included it among their concert numbers. A group of newspaper reporters is said to have sung it on the doorstep of Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt the night he was elected to the Presidency. It has since become a White House favorite, and it is said that the President sometimes leads the chorus.

Finally two Arizona claimants to its authorship lost a suit against the National Broadcasting Company and others for \$500,000. The humble and modest cowboy song has at last rippled the sea of American music.<sup>22</sup>

The highly cosmopolitan nature of the ranching frontier caused influences to play on it from many sources. That being true, cowboy songs had characteristics of Negro music from the American South and of English ballads, sung perhaps by some younger son of an English family who had been attracted to the cattle kingdom. Like the overall culture of the cattlemen's frontier, its songs were derivative in nature, but



in content and spirit they became peculiarly American in a remarkably short time. Lomax described the process well in an introductory note to his first edition in 1910:

Out of the wild, far-away places of the big and still unpeopled West—in the canyons along the Rocky Mountains, among the mining camps of Nevada and Montana, and on the remote cattle ranches of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona—yet survives the Anglo-Saxon ballad spirit that was active in secluded districts in England and Scotland even after the coming of Tennyson and Browning. This spirit is manifested both in the preservation of the English ballad and in the creation of local songs. Illiterate people, and people cut off from newspapers and books, isolated and lonely folk—thrown back on primal resources for entertainment and for the expression of emotion—express themselves through somewhat the same character of songs as did their forefathers of perhaps a thousand years ago. In some such way have been made and preserved the cowboy songs and other frontier ballads contained in this volume.<sup>23</sup>

Although these songs reflect primarily a nostalgia for the past, they may well strengthen American addiction to certain values expressed in them.

The ranching frontier also produced a surprisingly large number of "cowboy artists" who painted scenes of that rapidly disappearing age. In Wyoming, for instance, E. W. Gollings won widespread attention as the "Cowboy Artist" before his death in 1932. He actually punched cattle for big outfits in South Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming, using his spare time for drawing, before winning a scholarship at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts. By 1909 he had a studio at Sheridan, Wyoming, and began to attract attention both in Amer-

<sup>22</sup> John A. and Alan Lomax, *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* (New York, 1938), pp. xviii-xix.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxv.



ED BOREIN, although less well known than artists Remington and Russell, portrayed the cowmen (particularly of the Southwest) with great skill during his long life. Three typical examples of his work are shown above and at the top of page 17. C. M. RUSSELL, whose work reflected his experience as a cowhand (although he never claimed to be a skilled one) depicted the West of the cowboy with fidelity and honesty. At the bottom of page 17 is reproduced the popular "Time to Talk," the original of which is in the Historical Society of Montana collection.

ica and abroad with his Western paintings. Four of his pictures hang in the state capitol of Wyoming at Cheyenne—"The Smoke Signal," "Indian Attack on Overland Stage," "Emigrants on the Platte," and "The Wagon Box Fight."<sup>25</sup>

Frederic Remington gained still greater fame as an illustrator, reporter, and recorder of Western life. Born at Canton, New York, in 1861, he studied at the Yale School of Fine Arts and the Art Student's League in New York City. At age nineteen he made his first trip west, where he ran a sheep and mule ranch, made some money, lost it, and was helped to return east by Emerson Hough. Determined to report and record life in the raw, preferably men near nature, he traveled widely in North America and abroad. Indians, cowboys, frontiersmen, and especially horses were favorite subjects for his pen and brush. Some critics rate him as the outstanding delineator of the American West.<sup>26</sup>

Another cowboy artist, Will James, wrote and illustrated a number of autobiographical works, living and working for a considerable period of time at a four-thousand-acre ranch on the Crow reservation south of Billings, Montana.

James was a protégé of Charles M. Russell, perhaps the most famous of all cowboy artists who actually lived in the West during the cattle kingdom era. Born into a prosperous St. Louis family, Russell insisted on modeling and painting Western scenes in spite of family hopes that he would turn to something else.

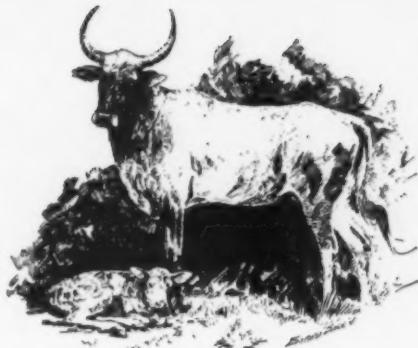
Although Russell never considered himself a first-rate cowboy, he did actually participate in ranch work. In his earlier years he gave many of his paintings and pieces of statuary to friends or sold them for whatever purchasers wished to pay. After marriage his wife, an astute businesswoman, began to handle sales of his paintings, turned out at a studio in Great Falls, Montana, and built for him by his father, for sums running into the thousands of dollars. Nevertheless, he actually sent his most famous work, called "Waiting for a Chinook" or "The Last of the Five Thousand," as a postcard sketch during the disastrous winter of 1886-1887 to a rancher who wanted to know how his cattle were faring. Russell's sketch of a lone cow standing knee-deep in snow, tail and ears frozen, the glassy stare of death in her eyes, with wolves circling in anticipation of her death, expressed as no amount of writing has ever done the horrible de-

<sup>25</sup> Wyoming, A Guide (New York, 1941), p. 159.  
<sup>26</sup> Mahonri M. Young, "Frederic Remington," *Dictionary of American Biography*, XV, 496-497.

struction of vast herds of cattle in a debacle that proved once and for all the weakness of open-range ranching on the Northern plains.<sup>27</sup>

Russell displayed both the strength and the limitations of cowboy artists as a whole. Visitors to the collection of his works at the State Historical Society of Montana in Helena see before them a vivid panorama of the ranching frontier. He possessed great skill as a draftsman, used color effectively, and generally achieved complete historical accuracy in every detail of his paintings. They are indeed magnificent reproductions of life in the Old West. At the same time, they stress action to the sacrifice of other elements, and they never quite escape being illustrations. Genre in nature, they achieve Russell's desire to preserve the passing era faithfully for later generations even more than to individualize his work. In accomplishing that end, he proved his great talent.

The ranching frontier has also greatly influenced American society in the field of dress. Everywhere one sees

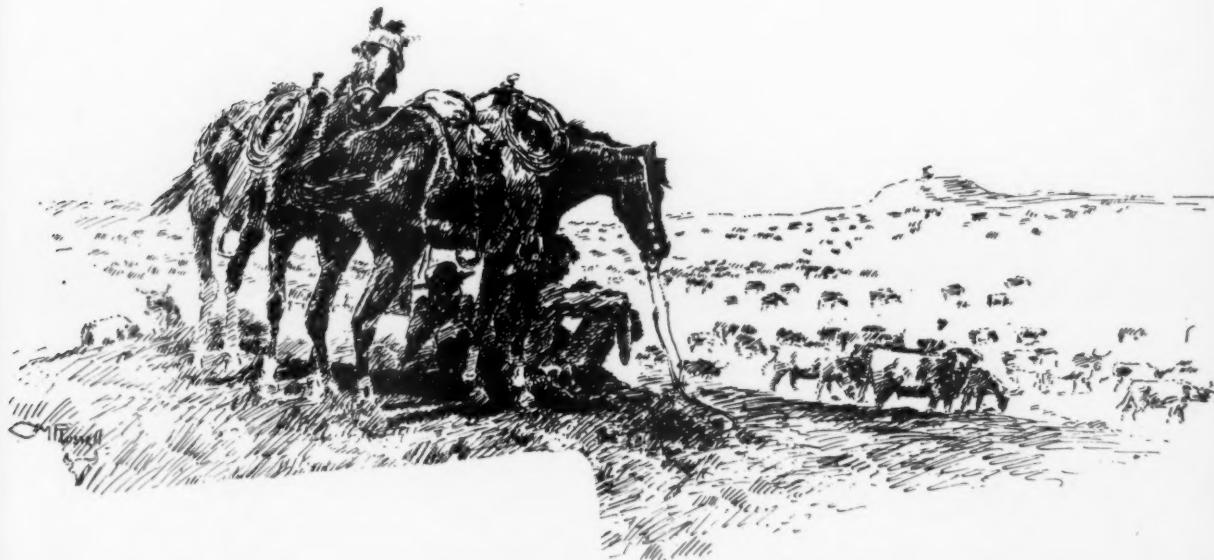


people wearing clothing reminiscent of that era, a fact too obvious to need illustration.

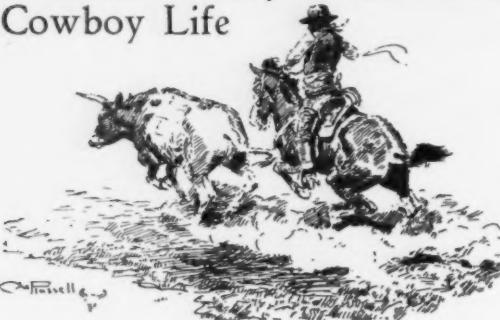
Lastly, the rancher and the cowboy have influenced the American language. Philip Ashton Rollins called attention to the large number of words and phrases which entered common usage through the medium of cowboy language and literature, expressions such as stamped, roped in, rounded up, hog-tied, milling around, buffaloed, throw the bull, and butted in.<sup>28</sup> Maverick, rustler, locoed, and many another word achieved popularity because they seem so fittingly American to those who prize our cowboy heritage.

<sup>27</sup> Ramon F. Adams and Homer E. Britzman (with biographical check list by Karl Yost), *Charles M. Russell, The Cowboy Artist: A Biography* (Pasadena, California, 1948), pp. 75-80 and *passim*.

<sup>28</sup> Philip Ashton Rollins, *The Cowboy: An Unconventional History of Civilization on the Old-Time Range* (New York, 1936), p. 376.



## A Picture Story of Montana Cowboy Life



Focus on . . .

## The Rawhide Northern Rangeland

UNLIKE other aspects of the exciting western frontier, the day of the cattlemen—at least after the earliest period of Texas trail driving—was documented photographically. And when it was not, there were enough able, talented illustrators around to create a fascinating graphic record. Some of these, like Charlie Russell, lived and worked as cowboys during the glorious peak and the sad decline of the open-range era. As for photographs, more and more of them are coming to light from the dusty attics and the stored trunks of the cowmen's descendants. Many of the



pictures seen here have only recently been "discovered" by the Historical Society of Montana. More and more keep coming in by dint of prodigious digging. Most of them come close to telling the stories of cowboy life and the cowmen's genius without further words. But a photo without words is like a cowboy on foot—"no man at all". Hence the brief captions.



**MEN OF THE XIT**, the famed Texas cattle outfit which operated for two decades in Montana are pictured in roundup camp in 1909 at the center of this page. For the story of the XIT in Montana, see page 46. **FLOWEREE CATTLE COMPANY** cowboys are shown above on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation in 1910. Both photos, taken by G. V. Barker of Lewiston, Idaho, were recently acquired by the Historical Society of Montana.

Illustrations in pen and ink used in this section are by the greatest of the rangeland masters, Cowboy Artist Charles Marion Russell.





**Roping and Tying**—Cowboys on the range were faced with many dangerous tasks, some of which involved roping and tying mad "critters." In this photo by G. V. Barker in 1910 on the Blackfoot Indian Reservation, cowboys are castrating. Barker identified the man on horseback on the right as Joe McKay, "a half-breed Indian, and I rode on the bedwagon with him for two seasons. He was the nighthawk in charge of a cavvy of saddle ponies."



**Herding and Working**—Twelve hundred head of cattle are being rounded up and driven into a corral at a dipping vat in this action picture by G. V. Barker. The next day, Photographer Barker wrote, the boys were branding calves and while eating dinner they discovered a prairie fire had started from the branding irons. A cook, who had never been on the range before, used some knowledge he had read about, built a backfire, and the blaze was controlled.

**Beef On The Range**—Three thousand head of beef on trail along the North Fork of the Milk River, northeast of Browning. This graphic photo was taken by G. V. Barker on the Blackfoot Reservation in 1910. Jack Galbraith, in charge of the herd, allowed Barker to ride nightherd on the drive. "I had lots of fun listening to the cattle bawling," the photographer wrote.





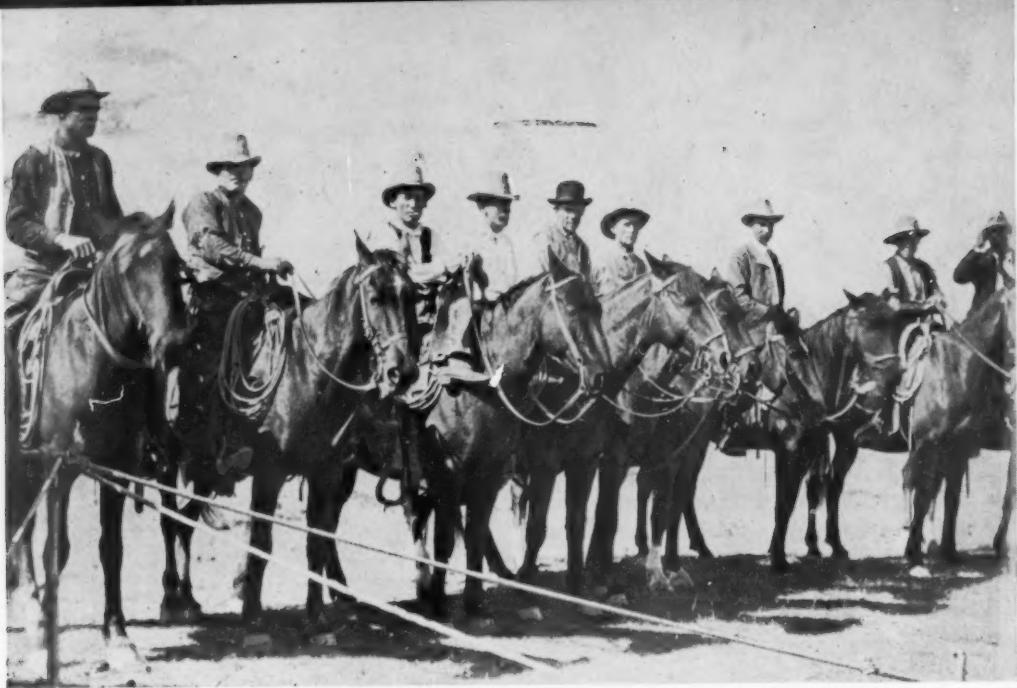
**BRANDING**—A whiteface critter receives the famed brand of the XIT in this picture, taken in 1910 near Cedar Creek north of Terry in Eastern Montana's Prairie County. The cowhands, left to right, are Warren Johnson, Pete Sherry, J. K. Marsh and Bill Fought.



**HORSE REMUDA**—A cavvy of 165 saddle ponies of the XIT, confined by the familiar rope corral on Seventeen Mile Creek, north of Glendive. G. V. Barker photographed this in 1908 after the horse drive, photographed against the sun and reproduced on pages 48 and 49. "I never saw a finer bunch of horses on the range," Barker wrote.

**HOME ON THE RANGE**—XIT cowboys are shown in one of the first camps the giant cattle outfit ran after starting its Montana operations. This photo, owned by Mrs. Vida A. Denby of Fallon, Mont., was taken in October, 1894, on Bad Route Creek southwest of Glendive.





## THE COWBOY

An XIT roundup crew is seen in this picture, owned by Charles Clement (who is still living) and who is the cowboy at the extreme left. Others are Pete Cheary, J. K. Marsh, Henry Egan, Pete Peterson, Jim Johnston, and Lord Cameron. Below, one of the XIT's first Montana trail crews, photographed by L. A. Huffman in his Miles City studio in 1890. A framed reproduction hangs in the Range Riders Museum in that famed cowtown. The riders: back row, l. to r., Steve Beebe, Frank Freeland, Billy Wilson; front row, l. to r., John Flowers, A. L. Denby, Tom McHenry, Dick Mabrey, and a hand known only as "Tony".



# *The Day of the Cattlemen Dawned Early--In Montana*

by ROBERT H. FLETCHER

AS THE northern frontier fur-trade waned at the end of the 1830's, American ingenuity found new interests to lure the most adventuresome feet westward again. One of the bright new interests was known as *The Oregon Trail*. In 1841, only twenty-four west-bound emigrants passed the Whitman Mission at Walla Walla, near Oregon's promised land. In 1842 there were more than a hundred. By 1843 a great caravan of 121 wagons and 1,000 persons made the trip, leaving Westport, Missouri, in June and reaching their destination in October. They had 698 head of oxen, 296 horses, and 973 head of loose cattle, most of the latter traveling in what they called the "cow column," under the care of Jesse Applegate. From then on, the number of ox-drawn prairie schooners increased each year. The movement had started as a trickle; now the road to Oregon became a colorful thoroughfare, particularly after discovery of gold in California.

It took from four to six months to cover the tough 2,000 miles from Missouri to Oregon, depending on the weather and the breaks. Oxen were favored as motive power. They were cheaper and more tractable than mules or horses, less coveted by the Indians, and complex harness was not required. They were not as easily stampeded and stayed closer to the wagons while grazing. As an added advantage, they could be converted into beef when occasion required.

It has been estimated that at least 500,000 people followed the "Big Medicine Road of the Whites" and its various

cut-offs. They packed their covered wagons with their household goods and garden tools and took off, singing "Oh, Susanna" while old Buck and Star laid into the yokes. They pushed along at the exhilarating pace of fifteen miles a day—some days. Babies were born in the prairie schooners and rocked to a lullaby of creaking leather and wagon wheelers hollering for tar. Some of the starters were buried on the trail.

There were just a few, inadequate havens for rest, repairs, and purchase of supplies: Fort Laramie on the North Platte, built by Bill Sublette in 1843; Fort Bridger on the Black Fork of the Green River, built by "Old Gabe" and his partner Louis Vasquez when they saw the diminishing fur trade being superseded by opportunities for commerce with pilgrims bound for Oregon and California; Fort Hall on the Snake, which Nat Wyeth had built to stymie the American fur traders who had double-crossed him; Fort Boise, where Hudson's Bay's courtly Mr. Pierre Pambrun was in charge; finally, Fort Vancouver, presided over by hospitable Dr. McLoughlin, who, as American settlement thickened, had no illusions concerning the outcome of the International ownership dispute.

What a pageant it became! Organized wagon trains of hopeful homemakers; bullwhackers urging stolid oxen with whip, goad, and profanity; Mormons pushing the dragging hand carts, following their leaders with abiding faith to find sanctuary in Deseret; Forty-niners forking off to El Dorado; pony express riders breaking records by car-

rying Abe Lincoln's inaugural address from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Placerville, California, in seven days and seventeen hours; Ben Holladay's stage coaches; the freight outfits of Russell, Majors, and Waddell—6,250 wagons and 75,000 oxen transporting military supplies; and, finally, after 1860, a crop of gold-seekers and settlers heading for the placer diggings and valleys of Idaho and western Montana Territory. No wonder the plains Indians clapped hand over mouth in the sign of amazement as the endless procession kept moving out of the east to disappear in the hazy blue of the west.

By August 14, 1850, the register at Fort Laramie had recorded the passing of 39,506 men and over 3,000 women and children so far that season, and since not more than 80 percent registered, the total was probably close to 55,000. In their outfits were at least 9,000 wagons and 36,000 oxen, to say nothing of horses, mules, sheep, and milch cows. This was traffic made to order for any sort of roadside business—business that was not long in coming. Beaver would be replaced by beef as an item of frontier commerce in the Northwest Rocky Mountain region.

The winter of 1849-50 overtook an Oregon-bound regiment of troops on the Trail. They were forced to camp on the Snake River near Fort Hall. With them was John Owen, sutler or storekeeper, who had accompanied the soldiers from St. Joseph. In the spring, his merchandising sense argued that it would be more profitable to sever his military connections and linger thereabouts to trade with the passing pilgrims than it would be to continue west.

That same season, Captain Richard Grant and his two sons came out of the north on similar business. The doughty captain, of Falstaffian proportions, was a former factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, having supervised a number of their trading posts, including Fort Hall, before his retirement to a life of independence. Though prone to wander

in the interests of commerce, he maintained a log-cabin base in the upper end of Montana's Jefferson Valley, where the Stinking Water (now more elegantly named the Ruby River) flows into the Beaverhead.

Captain Dick was married to a convent-educated daughter of Red River mixed-bloods. Their sons, Johnny and James, lived with their own families in elkskin tepees near their parents, and the Grant community became the hub for the scattered homes of other mountain men now becoming cattle conscious with the decline of the fur trade a firm reality. In the neighboring Deer Lodge Valley there was a tiny village of French breeds at the warm springs, whose salt-encrusted cone formed a lick that attracted the deer and gave the valley its name. There was a similar settlement at Cottonwood, now the city of Deer Lodge, Montana. The mountain valleys were good places for these people to winter. Game was fairly plentiful; they could be snug and comfortable in their cabins and lodges, consume bad trade-liquor on festive occasions, and visit back and forth while their squaws split the wood and did the cooking.

In the fall, the Grant men came home, driving a herd of cattle that they had accumulated by trading on the Mormon Trail between Fort Bridger and Salt Lake. John Owen also came north.

Traffic by now had reached such proportions on the Oregon Trail that grass along the route was at a premium. Work steers couldn't plod in the yoke day

Montana's Robert H. Fletcher not only has first-hand knowledge of the cattle industry, but has a way of writing about it with depth and scope as well as humor. Nowhere has his knowledge or his flare for writing been better shown than in "Free Grass to Fences," the history of Montana's century-old cattle industry, published in 1960 under the aegis of the Montana Stockgrowers Association and the Historical Society of Montana. The accompanying article, giving in capsule form the beginnings of the cattle history of Montana, is based largely on the first two chapters of this important book, the most definitive work ever done on the subject.

after day and do well on short rations. They grew footsore and gaunt. Many of them had to be abandoned when all they needed was rest and full bellies to put them in condition. The travel season was short, the way was long, and the emigrants couldn't take time out for rest. Former fur traders like the Grants and their neighbors, who had no particular place to go and were in no hurry to get there, camped beside the Trail and bartered. They found that the summer trade combined pleasure and profit.

The Grants, Delaware Jim, Bob Hereford, and others of the mountain valleys to the north, had a system of exchanging trade goods and trinkets with the Salish Indians for horses, furs, and dressed skins, which were obtainable at bargain prices. The mountain men took the products of this trade to the Oregon Trail and swapped them for played-out cattle which they drove to the natural pastures in the Beaverhead and Deer Lodge Valleys. After a winter that put a layer of lard under their rinds, the cattle were hazed back to the Trail in time to meet the van of the next season's wagon trains. The traders then plied a brisk trade by exchanging one active, fat steer for two thin, trail-weary critters. Such profitable business attracted competition. White settlers had appeared in another big valley in the heart of the mountains and they, too, became interested in cattle.

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Some years before, Father Pierre Jean De Smet, that inspired young Jesuit priest of Belgian birth, had responded to the last of the Nez Perce and Flathead appeals for missionaries. At a preliminary meeting with them in 1840, he promised to return the following year prepared to establish a permanent center. True to his word, in 1841 he accompanied a party of Oregon-bound emigrants from St. Louis as far as Fort Hall. His small retinue of assistants was equipped with saddle horses, pack animals, four carts, and a wagon drawn by oxen. He was received by

an expectant contingent of Flatheads, who conducted their new religious mentors to their ancestral home in the Bitterroot Valley.

Under Father De Smet's energetic guidance, the original St. Mary's Mission was built in 1841. During the next few years he and his aides accomplished much. They split rails and fenced a plot of ground where they planted wheat and potatoes with seeds brought from Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Colville, near Kettle Falls on the Columbia. They brought milch cows over travois trails from the same source. The mission flourished; but the unregenerate Blackfeet from the plains, who loved to harry the Flatheads, were a perpetual menace. Also, white trappers and hunters formed the habit of wintering near the mission. Those hardy scalawags had an ungodly influence on the flock, according to Father Lawrence B. Palladino, who recorded that "amid the good seed sown by the Fathers, an enemy scattered cockle which seemed likely for a while to destroy the harvest of souls." The priests encountered other perplexing problems, and in 1850 decided to move farther west.

John Owen's arrival from the Oregon Trail was perfectly timed. He bought the mission improvements, found an industrious and comely squaw, and settled down to enjoy life in that fertile and scenic Bitterroot Valley locality near the present town of Stevensville, Montana. He, too, fenced land and did a bit of farming. He rebuilt the saw and grist mills of the departed fathers and constructed an adobe stronghold that became known as Fort Owen. With the stock acquired from the priests as a nucleus, he developed a herd of cattle.

The fort became a gathering place and trading center for both Indians and whites. "Major" Owen catered to their wants with Oregon goods brought in by pack train from the Dalles on the Columbia. Settlers began to build homes in the neighborhood of the fort, where protection and supplies were close at hand. Some came over the Indian trails

from the west; some, like the Grants, were former Hudson's Bay Company employees; others, like John Owen, had traded on the Oregon Road or had just drifted in. The major was a hospitable host who had accumulated a library of some three hundred volumes. His conviviality is indicated by his daily journal, which was salted with such laconic entries as "Old woman went fishing today," a reference to one of his squaw's foibles, "Sundry nips last night," a reference to one of his own.

The decade of the 1850's was the first, and a prosperous, period in the cattle business of future Montanans. Many of these first stock dealers became leaders in subsequent industrial and political affairs of the territory. In 1851 Neil McArthur, in charge of Fort Hall, accompanied the Grant brothers to Salt Lake. There he met young Louis Maillet, fresh from the east and looking for employment. McArthur hired him, principally because he wanted Louis to teach him French. The winter of 1852-53 was extremely severe in parts of Oregon. The Columbia River in the vicinity of the Dalles was frozen for six weeks. Settlers in that area lost thousands of cattle. In the spring, McArthur made Maillet a partnership offer to buy stock on the Oregon Trail, drive them to the Bitterroot Valley for fattening, and then sell them in the settlements along the Columbia to replace the winter's losses. This idea started the two men on a horse and cattle trading career that kept them shuttling between the Bitterroot and Oregon. They ranged their stock in the Bitterroot, Grass and Jocko Valleys of present-day Western Montana, and sold or traded them in Oregon, from Fort Colville to Fort Vancouver.

This was one of the earliest full-time cattle enterprises in what was to be Montana. The partnership was a success until 1859. Then, during Maillet's absence on a business trip to California, McArthur headed for the Fraser River gold excitement, leaving their financial affairs in a tangle. When they had last

inventoried their joint property, it had figured at \$150,000, a very comfortable stake for those days. When Maillet returned, he found that he was broke.

In 1851 Lieutenant Caleb E. Irvine was stationed at Fort Drum, a military post located at the Dalles. He met John Owen who was there after supplies for his trading post. The lieutenant resigned his commission in the U. S. Army and came to the Bitterroot with Owen. He spent the next five years trading on the Mullan Road and bringing cattle back to the valley. The transactions of these early cattlemen were not large, but as they moved back and forth between their home range and the markets of Utah, Idaho, and Oregon, each trip piled up a little more barter profit.

When General Isaac I. Stevens was appointed governor of the brand-new territory of Washington in 1853, he was interested in an expedition, outfitted at St. Paul, to make a reconnaissance that might determine the future of a northern railroad route to the Pacific. Lieutenant John Mullan, Second Artillery, U.S.A., was the ranking engineer of the party, which included Fred H. Burr, engineer, and Christopher P. Higgins, packer and wagon freight expert. Congress was not as liberal with appropriations for public work in those days. It took a great deal of wheedling of proponents of the scheme to procure authorization of a very modest sum for locating and constructing a military road from Fort Benton, head of navigation on the Missouri, to Fort Walla Walla, Washington. The road was to serve as a precursor for steel rails.

Lieutenant Mullan began preliminary surveys from headquarters in the Bitterroot Valley and actual construction was started from the west end in 1859. That winter the engineers camped in a cantonment at St. Regis de Borgia, east of Lookout Pass, where they operated the first deep freeze in the Pacific Northwest. Beef cattle were driven in, slaughtered, frozen in the snowbanks, and they supplied the culinary department until spring. By 1862, Mullan had

succeeded in constructing 624 miles of trail which an average wagon outfit could negotiate in forty-seven days.

Both Fred Burr and Chris Higgins were to become cattlemen and prominent citizens in their new environment. In the fall of '58, Burr purchased 400 head of cattle in Salt Lake and drove them to the Bitterroot Valley. The young Irishman, Chris Higgins, with his partner, Frank L. Worden, moved stock into the Hell Gate area (near present Missoula) bringing them from Walla Walla in 1860.

Four years after the Jesuits sold their Bitterroot improvements to John Owen, Father Adrian Hoecken, originally of St. Mary's Mission, established the St. Ignatius Mission at the behest of the Kalispell and Pend d' O'reille clans of the Salish nation. The mission is located at the south end of Mission Valley, then called Sinielemen by the Indians, literally translated "surrounded." Twice a year the Flatheads were accustomed to leave the mountains to hunt buffalo on the plains. According to Father Palladino, "the Indians whilst on the great hunts, were a prey to the wildest excitement which left little if any room for religious instructions." There can be no doubt that those were mighty absorbing occasions, involving every member of the tribe. Unquestionably, the priests tried to discourage these hunts with all the diplomacy they could muster, which may account for the fact that four years after the Mission of St. Ignatius was built, the Indians, through the mission, owned 1,000 cattle, a docile, unexciting substitute for buffalo.

Robert Stuart, Virginian turned Forty-niner, left his wife and children in Iowa while he went gold-seeking in California. He evidently thought well of the opportunities out there for he came back for his family in the summer of 1851, tarried a few months, then returned to the gold fields, accompanied by two of his sons, James and Granville, aged twenty and seventeen, respectively. Robert himself stayed just

a year, then returned to his Nancy. The boys lingered for four more years, with varying fortunes, before heading east with nine others. They reached Malad Creek in Utah in mid-July of 1857, and there Granville came down with "mountain fever." After delaying ten days, eight of the party went on, leaving the Stuart brothers and their close friend Reese Anderson at the camp of Jake Meek, trader and friend of the Grants.

At Salt Lake, Brigham Young had proclaimed the independent state of Deseret, an act that Congress construed as secession. When persuasion failed to alter the decision of the leader of the Latter Day Saints, the military expedition under General Albert Sidney Johnston was ordered out to bring Utah back into the Union. While Granville was convalescing, the Mormons became greatly perturbed over the approach of the troops, and their patrols blocked all roads and passes. Martial law was instituted insofar as traveling gentiles were concerned. The Stuarts could go neither east nor west, lest they be apprehended by Brigham Young's "Destroying Angels." When Jake Meek, their host, suggested that the three boys move north with him to a remote valley where they could wait for the "Monon War" to blow over, they had little choice but to go.

They crossed the Continental Divide at present Monida in October and came down Red Rock Creek and the Beaverhead River to the mouth of Blacktail Creek where they holed up until Christmas, with the Bob Dempseys and the Antoine LeClairs their close neighbors. The Grants, the Tom Pambruns, John Powell, Louis Maillet, John Jacobs and family, the Bob Herefords, John Saunders, Antoine Pourrier, and several others were at their old stomping ground near the mouth of the Stinking Water, while Delaware Jim and his brother Ben held forth a mile down the Beaverhead. The Stuart boys and Reese Anderson soon became acquainted with the local citizens and fell into the

routine of those pioneer traders and mixed-bloods.

Around New Year's Day of 1858, ten men who had enlisted as teamsters in General Johnston's army arrived from Fort Bridger, under the command of B. F. Ficklin. This detail had been given the assignment of buying beef cattle for the soldiers. By that time, Captain Grant had a herd of six hundred. Burr, McArthur, Maillet, and others were very much in the livestock business. In spite of the plentiful supply, Ficklin could not get all the cattle he wanted nor could he get them on terms that suited him. The mountainers had heard exaggerated rumors of the Mormon situation. They were reluctant to sell stock to the Army lest they offend the Latter Day Saints, who, they feared, would retaliate by sending armed men to wipe them out. Some of them had even contemplated leaving for more remote places until the trouble was over. They refused to guarantee delivery of beef animals to Mormon territory under the existing conditions. Ficklin returned to Fort Bridger in the spring without beef, but he had set a record as the first cattle buyer to come to Montana.

The Stuarts had not lived the life of lotus eaters that winter, but still they were not eager to start for Iowa in the spring. They liked the country and the life they had fortuitously found, and decided to go trading on "The Road." This popular vocation was to engage their interest for two years. But before becoming traders, they made a cursory examination of alleged placer ground on Benetsee Creek, a tributary of Clark's Fork of the Columbia, west of Deer Lodge Valley.

Benetsee Finley, a Red River breed who had acquired some prospecting experience in California, had washed out about two ounces of gold dust there. He sold it to Angus McDonald, factor of the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Connah on Post Creek of the Mission Valley. The gold proved to be high-grade, but Benetsee did nothing further

about his prospect. Benetsee Creek (now Gold Creek) had fascinated the Stuarts ever since they had heard about the gold. They found colors but lacked equipment to do any serious development work; so off they went for the Oregon Trail with twenty head of trading horses.

Their excursions took them as far south as Camp Floyd, below Salt Lake, where General Johnston's invading army was encamped. From there they went to Green River, favorite haunt of the mountain men in the fur days, and began buying and trading oxen in earnest. In the fall they drove the cattle they had acquired to the mouth of the Stinking Water. There the Indians pestered them by killing their stock, so they moved on to the mouth of Benetsee Creek, with the intention of developing their placer prospect. They switched from tepee to log cabin, wood and won Indian helpmates, and in no time at all the new settlement of American Fork became a popular stopping point. Strangers, as well as old-timers, began dropping in. They came from the Oregon Trail and in from Fort Benton via the Mullan Road, and they found hospitality with the Stuarts. Most of them were en route to the Salmon River gold diggings, west of the Bitterroot Mountains in Idaho Territory. Some of them lingered awhile and sluiced out fair results in nearby Pioneer Gulch.

Mail deliveries were roundabout and uncertain at American Fork, but the Stuarts managed to keep in touch with their family back in Iowa. And so they learned that their brother Tom had turned Pike's Peaker. They got word to him that prospects looked good on Gold Creek. Tom may have told a friend, who told a friend. At any rate, gold-seekers soon came baying up the trail from Colorado. Two of them, Bill Eads and John White, wandered off the beaten trail and on July 28, 1862, struck pay dirt on Grasshopper Creek, originally named Willard's Creek by Lewis

and Clark. Soon the little gulch was crowded to overflowing and the camp of Bannack came into existence. Other major discoveries followed: in 1863, fabulous Alder Gulch; in 1864, Last Chance Gulch. The hills swarmed with prospectors, and mining camps mushroomed wherever a strike was made. Suddenly there were thousands of hun-

gry men to be fed in a corner of Idaho Territory that was soon to be southwestern Montana. The beef herds that had accumulated as an anecdote to offset the decline of the fur trade represented gold on the hoof. There was a ready, built in market. Montana's cattle business—as few people realize—was a going concern almost a century ago!

# The Newman Brothers

## Forgotten Cattle Kings of the Northern Plains

by ROBERT H. BURNS

THIS IS A chronicle, sometimes hard to pin down, of the once great but almost unknown Newman Ranches, operated by businessmen of vision who were among the first to see the vast potential of the great, grassy plains of the Intermountain States and who carried on the West's livestock heritage after the primitive days of hides and tallow but who returned to other fields of endeavor long before the modern day of fresh, red meat.

All informed Western buffs today accept the fact that when travel-worn oxen (or cattle) were turned loose to graze on these nutritious natural grasses they soon recovered strength and rapidly put on flesh. Yet a century and a quarter ago this was generally unknown except to a few of the earliest northern traders and freighters, who found out quite by accident. The Newmans learned the secret early and capitalized on it.

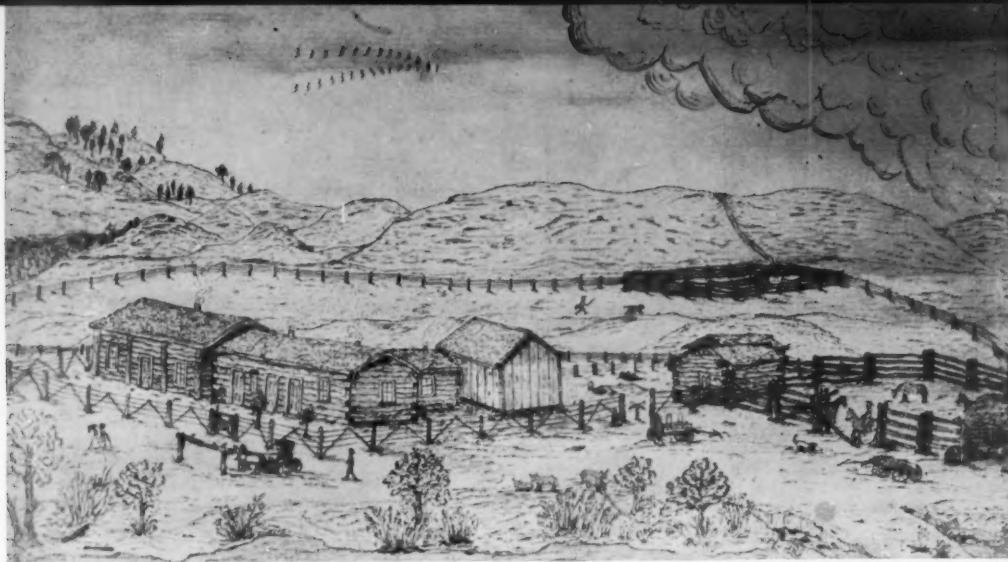
By 1852, work cattle had been fully wintered in Wyoming—with remarkable success. Seth Ward, a trader and partner of Robert Campbell, ranged worn oxen in the sheltered Chugwater Valley and they emerged strong and in full flesh in the spring. Alexander

Majors, the pioneer transportation man, successfully wintered cattle in Wyoming in 1854.<sup>1</sup> Both men were freighters, and except among freighters, little credence then was given to the possibility of cattle living through, much less thriving during, a hard northern winter.

A widely used reference to the part work oxen played in demonstrating the feasibility of winter grazing is that reported by Joseph Nimmo, who at the same time gives us one of the rare leads on the early activities of the Newmans:

Concerning the origin of the northwestern grazing, there are several accounts. There has been a common supposition that the fact of thirst of the buffalo in former years, during inclement season, suggested the feasibility of pasturing cattle on the wild range. But whatever might have been inferred from the habits of the buffalo, the first demonstration of the fattening effects of winter feeding in the north seems to have been an accidental discovery.

In the winter of 1864-65, just 20 years ago, Mr. E. S. Newman, who was conducting a train of supplies overland to Camp Douglas, was snowed up on the Laramie Plains. Arranging the train in habitable shape, he turned the oxen out to die in the neighboring waste places. But the fatigued cattle began to improve from the start and in March were gathered up in better condition than when they were set adrift to starve and feed the wolves. The discovery led to the purchase of stock cattle for fattening in the north, and the trade has steadily grown to its present proportions, accelerated greatly during the past fifteen years by the building of various roads to the North and West.<sup>2</sup>



NEWMAN RANCH on the Niobrara, in Nebraska, as it looked in about 1886 when its range covered an area 30 by 65 miles, and served as headquarters for the farflung Newman cattle interests.

(Drawing owned by P. H. Waddill.)

This reference led the writer to believe that Wyoming's range cattle industry started on the Laramie Plains as a sequel to the experiences of Ward, Majors and others and capitalized upon by the Newman Brothers. But until recently, it was impossible to trace E. S. Newman or his brother, H. L., and find out where they started their operations and other pertinent facts.

In searching for the location of the Newman holdings, a similar instance of winter-lost freight oxen being recovered in good flesh, was located. This concerned one Tom Alsop,<sup>3</sup> who had experience with abandoned freight-oxen in December, 1865. As a consequence, in partnership with the well known Edward Creighton of Omaha and Charley Hutton of Laramie, he started cattle ranching on the Big Laramie River in 1869. This immediately followed the completion of a final grading contract for the Union Pacific Railroad in western Wyoming in the fall of 1868 and the spring of 1869, which provided a ready shipping facility to eastern markets.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Agnes Spring Wright, "70 Years' Cow Country," Wyo. Stockgrowers Assoc., 1942.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Nimmo, *Range and Ranch Cattle Traffic*, Washington, D. C., House Exec. Document 267, 48th Congress, 2nd Session, 1885, pp. 95-96.

<sup>3</sup> John D. Alsop, letter to writer, Apr. 25, 1944.

<sup>4</sup> *Wyoming's Pioneer Ranches*, Burns, Gillespie and Richardson, pub. 1955, Laramie, Wyo.

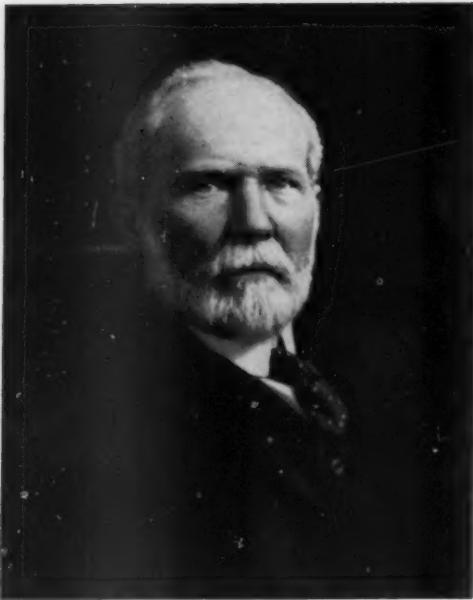
Phil Mandel was another early Wyoming cattle pioneer. He held the first land filed (in 1864) on the Laramie Plains, when Wyoming was still under the jurisdiction of Dakota Territory. Mandel had been stage master at the Little Laramie River Crossing of the Overland Stage Route.

Early in the 60's a man named Phillip Mandell [sic] took up a ranch on Lone Pine near the Little Laramie and concluded to try an experiment: He purchased all of the foot-sore,

Robert H. Burns, who has been with the Wool Section, Animal Science Division of the University of Wyoming at Laramie for 37 years, has headed that department since 1939. Born near Laramie, he studied at Denver's Regis College, then entered Wyoming U. to receive a degree in agriculture in 1920. The following year he went to Iowa State College, receiving an M.S. degree in animal nutrition. In 1930 and 1931 he studied at the University of Edinburgh, receiving his Ph.D. in science, with special work in animal genetics.

Dr. Burns has had a distinguished career in this country and abroad in the field of wool research, writing and teaching. His services as a consultant have been used by the U. S. Government as well as by the governments of Iran, China, and Afghanistan. His library on wool is one of the world's most extensive, and he has also collected a complete set of wool samples, including specially developed fibers and one extremely rare sample of Saxon Merino from the 1830 clip.

Dr. Burns has also done extensive research into the cattle industry. In 1955 he collaborated with A. S. Gillespie and W. G. Richardson in writing "Wyoming's Pioneer Ranches." A special hobby since 1950 has been organization and direction of annual Old Time Ranch Tours of the fabled Laramie Plains.



E. S. "ZEKE" NEWMAN, pioneer cattleman whose holdings ranged from Texas to Montana with headquarters at the Niobrara Ranch near the present city of Gordon, Neb., is pictured in about 1910, three years before his death. (Photo courtesy of Mrs. C. A. Newman.)

worn-out cattle from passing freighters, turned them out on the range, and found that they did remarkably well through the winter; but in the early spring the Indians made a raid upon him and captured almost his entire herd.<sup>5</sup>

Phil Mandel spent the remainder of his life on the Laramie Plains and his ranching operations extended throughout the years. Indeed, a county lane passing where his early ranches were located now bears his name.

But let us return to the story of the Newman Ranches, as finally unravelled after almost fifteen years of research. The second significant clue was found in *The Breeder's Gazette*, that outstanding early-day livestock periodical published in Chicago:

H. L. Newman, the wealthy St. Louis stock-raiser and banker, who with his brother, E. S. Newman, was the first to discover that cattle would live and flourish the year around in the northern plains, is now the head of the firm of Newman Brothers and Farr, who own 86,000 head of cattle. The discovery referred to was made by a belated "bull team" on the Laramie Plains during the severe winter of 1864. The firm's ranges are now scattered from Montana to Texas. They have two in Wyoming, one of which is on the Powder River, and the other on the Tongue River reaching into Montana; one in Nebraska on the Niobrara, one in the Indian Territory extending down into the Texas Panhandle, and one upon the uplands in far western Texas. The Niobrara range covers an area of thirty by sixty-five miles. The Powder River and Tongue ranges will alone support 30,000 head of cattle. In Indian Territory they

are leasing 128,000 acres from the Indians, having been the first to agitate the leasing question when Carl Schurz was Secretary of the Interior. Their cattle are today worth \$2,500,000 while the horses, acquired lands, fences, improvements and franchises easily bring the value up to \$3,000,000. This season they will market 14,000 beefeves, from which they will clear, after the season's expenses are paid, upwards of \$3,000,000 [sic]. The practical details of this gigantic business are managed by Mr. E. S. Newman, whose headquarters are on the Niobrara range. Mr. H. L. Newman rarely visits the ranges—some of them he has barely seen, but is engaged in managing his books at the St. Louis stockyards. In the course of a recent interview, he confidently expressed the opinion, that there would be no break in the price of stocks in the next three or four years. The widespread desire to engage in the business, he said, had of course raised prices to some extent, but an ever-increasing and healthful demand would off-set this. Altogether, he saw no reason why the cattle business should not continue to yield as large profits as ever, and present the finest opportunities for the investment of capital.<sup>6</sup>

This news item confirmed the fact that the E. S. Newman mentioned by Nimmo had indeed followed up his original observation by engaging in the cattle business in an area spreading from Texas to Oklahoma and on to Nebraska, Wyoming and Montana. The writer then sought to locate the ranches mentioned, particularly those on the Powder and Tongue Rivers in Wyoming and the Niobrara in Nebraska. Efforts were also made to ascertain if there was any record of the Newman family living in St. Louis.



CABIN ON THE LARAMIE PLAINS, an historic picture taken by Jackson Brothers of Omaha and reproduced by courtesy of Louise Alsop Pedersen. The Laramie Plains helped convince skeptics that livestock would flourish on native grasses despite the hard northern winters.

HENRY L. NEWMAN, partner with his brother in the Newman ranches, was also deeply involved in family freighting and banking interests, establishing what was to become the American National Bank of El Paso. He died in that city in 1911. (University of Wyoming photo.)

The fifth edition of the Wyoming Stock Growers *Brand Book*, published in 1887, lists the Niobrara Cattle Company, with an E. S. Newman as general manager and T. B. Irwin as foreman, located on the Running Water range and with Pine Ridge, Dakota Territory as its postoffice address. J. S. Irwin is listed as foreman of the Powder River range, with Miles City, Montana Territory, as postoffice address.

The Niobrara outfit is listed in the 1880, 1881 and 1882 editions of the Wyoming *Brand Book*, and in all cases the headquarters of the company is given as Pine Ridge, D. T. Roy Ross of Gordon, Neb., son of Ed Ross of the old Newman outfit, has told the writer that the headquarters of the Newman ranch was actually on the Niobrara (Indian name for Running Water), but that mail and telegrams did come by Pine Ridge.<sup>7</sup>

None of the many old timers originally interviewed in northeastern Wyoming had heard of E. S. Newman. Most of them were inclined to think that the ranches located on the Powder River and Tongue River were probably in Montana, near Miles City. Later information obtained while visiting the Sandhills region of Nebraska in 1952, confirms this. Sidney Irwin, younger brother of T. B. Irwin and J. S. Irwin, was living in Valentine at the time. He said that he had worked for his brother, J. S. Irwin, and had helped drive the Newman cattle from the Niobrara to Montana in 1887. Sidney definitely located the ranch headquarters

<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Animal Industry Report, 1889-90.

<sup>6</sup> "How the Western Cattle Ranges Were Started," *Breeder's Gazette*, Chicago, Sept. 6, 1883, p. 297.

<sup>7</sup> Roy Ross, letters to writer dated Nov. 30 and Dec. 12, 1951.

<sup>8</sup> Lou Grill, letters and map sent to writer Jan. 26, March 5, and June 12, 1952.

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Kell, Librarian, Missouri Historical Soc., letter dated Aug. 24, 1951.

<sup>10</sup> Mrs. C. A. Newman, letters to writer, dated Jan. 10, 21 and May 29, 1952.

<sup>11</sup> Mrs. Edith Newman Reynolds, letters to writer, dated Feb. 25, June 15 and Sept. 14, 1952; personal interview, June 30, 1952.



in Montana: it was south of Miles City at the confluence of the Little Powder and Big Powder rivers, some eight miles from the present town of Broadus. This information was readily confirmed by the able Montana range historian, Lou Grill of the *Miles City Star* who had checked local newspaper records and had talked with countless old timers there.<sup>8</sup>

The Missouri Historical Society of St. Louis located information on both the H. L. and E. S. Newman families. They were noted in the St. Louis Directory from 1884 to 1888 as being interested in banking and ranching. H. L. and E. S. Newman were listed as president and vice president, respectively, of the Niobrara Cattle Company in 1885. By 1889, however, both names had disappeared from the directory.<sup>9</sup>

Later, two surviving members of the two Newman families were located. The late Mrs. C. A. Newman of El Paso, Texas, proved to be the daughter-in-law of E. S., who died in El Paso in 1913.<sup>10</sup> Mrs. Edith Newman Reynolds of Whittier, Calif., the daughter of H. L., furnished the writer with a diary written by her father.<sup>11</sup> This entry is of particular interest:

In 1863, I bought half interest in a train belonging to D. W. Powers of 21 wagons which were loaded with general merchandise on our own account and sent to Salt Lake City, Utah. My brother, E. S., went with the train, the ven-



NEWMAN RANCH at the confluence of Montana's Little and Big Powder Rivers is shown in this L. A. Huffman photo, owned by the Historical Society of Montana. The ranch site was about eight miles from the town of Broadus in Powder River County in Southeastern Montana.

ture proved a very good one and the next time we sent a much larger number of wagons also loaded with our own goods. We associated with us in this venture John Kerr who was then with the banking firm of Scott, Kerr and Company, of Leavenworth, Kansas. He divided his one-third interest with W. B. Farr who at that time was with Scott, Kerr and Company. Mr. Farr went to Salt Lake, sold the goods and train and opened a bank, Powers, Newman and Company, the first ever opened in Salt Lake City. We only continued that bank a short time and Powers and I sold to W. Scott, Kerr and Company and I continued in freighting until 1867, when I opened a bank in Leavenworth, Newman and Havens, which continued until 1874 when I moved to St. Louis and opened the bank at the National Stock Yards, Illinois.

Mrs. Reynolds also furnished an obituary news clipping on her father, taken from an El Paso paper dated February 23, 1911, which traces the life and work of H. L. Newman. Born near Lexington, Kentucky, he lost his parents when 14 years old and resided with relatives. He was educated in local Kentucky schools and in the early 1860's, went to Leavenworth, Kansas and began what was to be a most active business career.

Lucrative freighting contracts to the West soon enabled him to start his early banking ventures. The Civil War created a serious handicap to the banking and freighting business in Leavenworth, but after the four years of turmoil, Mr. Newman promoted another bank, this time located in Salt Lake City. This venture proved most successful. As noted in his diary, however, he sold out and transferred activities to St. Louis, where he established the National Stock Yard Bank, still in existence. After more success there, he moved to Joplin, Missouri (1887) to establish the Joplin National Bank. In 1893 he went to El Paso, apparently for reasons of health. Soon he started yet another banking business, H. L. Newman and Son, which eventually be-

came the American National Bank. His cattle ventures were extensive until 1886, when much was lost in Colorado, Nebraska and Montana. Then he transferred his holdings to Texas. In 1895 Mr. Newman sold his cattle interests to Reynolds and Son of Kent, Texas.

The information contained in the obituary checks all information from other sources and confirms where H. L. Newman went when he left St. Louis in 1888, and why he was not listed in that city's directory in 1889. Little, unfortunately, of his extensive cattle ranching activities is reported.

In an interview on June 30, 1952 at Whittier, Calif., Mrs. Reynolds mentioned that her father's first job at Fort Leavenworth was in the store owned by Mr. Russell of the famed freighting firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell, and that they were responsible for getting him interested in the range cattle business. This ties in nicely with written history of the livestock industry of Colorado and Wyoming:

In 1858, when a United States force under Col. Albert Sidney Johnston was ordered to Salt Lake City with troops to subdue the Mormons, a party of Government freighters, Messrs. Russell, Majors and Waddell, who had many times before crossed the vast sandy plains west of the Missouri River, started with a long train from Fort Leavenworth in Kansas loaded with Government supplies and bound for Fort Douglas, at or near Salt Lake. It was rather late in the season when the journey began, and after many unexpected and unavoidable delays the caravan arrived at a point near which the small town of Bordeau, Wyoming now stands; and concluded that it would be impossible to reach the fort during the winter, in consequence of the snow, they went into camp. In a brief time they began to run short of feed for their stock, and it was determined to drive the cattle on the Chugwater Creek, a small stream but a few miles away, and leave them to "rustle" for themselves, with little hope of ever seeing them again, as it was feared they would either die from starvation and their bones would be found in the spring, or the Indians would slaughter them for beef. The winter was unusually severe,

R. B. "BOB" MILLER, veteran of the 1877 Texas trail drives, went to work that year for Zeke Newman. He provides a graphic description of having to kill spring calves because they were too weak to follow the herd. This photo, taken in 1900, was furnished by Mr. Miller, who was still living in Burwell, Neb. in 1951.

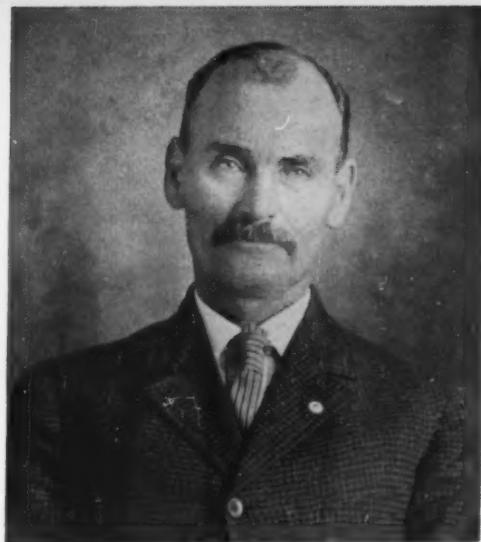
but when spring came and the freighters went out on the Chugwater they were more than glad to find in the immediate vicinity of where they had left them, some three or four of their cattle in splendid condition. They began to search for more and in a few days found nearly every hoof they had turned out early in the winter, and all fat enough for beef.<sup>12</sup>

Two references furnished by the Nebraska State Historical Society definitely located the E. S. Newman ranching operations. In an article in *Nebraska History*, A. E. Sheldon states: "After the final removal of the Sioux Indians to the Rosebud and Pine Ridge Reservations in Dakota in 1877-1878, ranchers could move their cattle into the former Sioux area north of the Sandhills. The first ranches were the Newman and Hunter ranches on the Niobrara. Government contracts to furnish fresh beef to the Indians on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge were obtained by both Newman and Hunter and provided for a time the chief outlet for the marketing of their cattle."<sup>13</sup>

James C. Dahlman, in another article in *Nebraska History*, wrote: "The Newman ranch in 1878 was located at the mouth of Antelope Creek on the Niobrara, twelve miles east of where the town of Gordon now stands. It was one of the large cow ranches handling from 10,000 to 15,000 head."<sup>14</sup>

In May, 1952, the writer visited the site of this Newman ranch with Roy Ross of Gordon, Neb., son of Ed. T. Ross, one of the foremen for the E. S. "Zeke" Newman outfit. The description given by Dahlman proved quite correct. One of the original buildings was still standing at the mouth of Antelope Creek, with the old hewn logs exposed at places where the more recently installed siding had been broken.

The experiences of some top hands who worked for the Newman outfit in the early days were recounted by Roy



Ross in a letter addressed to the writer in 1951:

Father (Ed T. Ross) started to work for Mr. Newman, E. S. or "Zeke" as he was known around here in the 90s, in the summer of 1882 and was on the pay roll continuously as long as Newmans ranned in Nebraska or Montana. When he went to work for the Newmans their range extended east about 40 miles or half way to the Mayberry Ranch which was located on Boiling Springs Flats on the river. This was known as the Boiling Springs Ranch. Newman went west about half way to Deer Creek, where Hunter and Evans had a ranch. The Newmans had a large pasture some 8 by 6 miles, north of the river and extending into the north sandhills. They used most of the hills north of the river, but were afraid of the Sandhills, south of the river, for some reason or other. The old Kearney trail went from Pine Ridge to Kearney right through them and the Indians hunted in the sandhills a good deal as some buffalo always wintered there.

The Newmans did not use some country south of the river known as Pole creek flats. This consisted of some 15,000 acres of low rolling hills and small to large vallies. Pole Creek and several lakes furnished waters and today there are several nice ranches and a number of farms. Mr. Newman had established line camps at various points at the edge of the high hills and kept turning back the cattle towards the river. These were the younger or new cattle that had been brought up the trail. The three ranches named were established primarily to supply beef to the Indians at the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations which lay to the north, so the older or fatter cattle were run north of the river and in the big pasture so as to be handy for issue, which was every month during the summer and most of the winter or until late in the year. I have heard Dad tell about making issues in November and also in March, but do not remember ever hearing him say anything about December, January and February. I have heard him tell about spending Christmas in Pine Ridge when he helped watch the horse herd on Craven Creek near Pine Ridge.

<sup>12</sup> Bureau of Animal Industry Report, 1889-1890 pp. 437.

<sup>13</sup> A. E. Sheldon, "The Sheridan County Region, Origin and Early History," *Nebraska History*, Vol. XVI, Oct.-Dec. 1935, pp. 245.



REMAINING BUILDINGS of the once-proud Newman Ranch on Nebraska's Niobrara, photographed in 1952 by the author. Located near Gordon, Neb., the ranch was established in 1878, running up to 50,000 head of cattle for government use at Pine Ridge Indian Agency or shipment to Chicago markets.

The Newmans issued most of their stuff at Pine Ridge but did make several issues at Rosebud. One was for the Boiling Springs, which had lost their gather in a stampede and would be late for the issue.

T. B. (Bennett) Irwin was ranch manager and Perry Parker was ranch boss. Johnny Burgess was range boss when Dad went to work. His first shipment (Dad's) was from Ogallala, Nebraska, in the fall of 1882. They took the beef herd up river to Box Butte Creek and then southeast by way of Crystal Lake. This route again went through the Sandhills and down Blue Creek to the North Platte. The 1884 beef shipment was made over the F. F. & M. V. Ry. I do not remember whether the shipment was made from Valentine or east of the river, but it was from that locality.

Stonewall and Billie Irwin, brothers of Bennett, also worked for the Newmans during this time (1882-1884). I think they worked mostly with the trail herds. One or both with Jim Dahlman brought a herd from Oregon about this time [In 1880, according to *Omaha Daily Bee*, May 26, 1929]. About this time one of the Irwin boys and Jim proposed that the outfit work the south hills and Mr. Newman let them take a small bunch of boys and see what they could do. They came out with quite a herd of cattle, most of them fat, though it was early spring. Some of the cattle were slick five and six year olds. About 1883 Mr. Newman acquired a ranch in Montana and moved some cattle from here up there, and in 1885 moved the last of his cattle from Nebraska up to the Montana range. Dad was in charge of this herd.

R. B. "Bob" Miller of Burwell, Nebraska, one of the early day trail drivers, added further information in a letter dated Dec. 20, 1951:

... I went to work for E. S. Newman in the spring of 1877. Mr. Newman had bought the Hays stock cattle for \$7.75 per head straight through except the spring calves. These we killed each morning because they could not walk, so every morning we would ride up to a calf and put our Winchester or Colts to its head and fire away, and then run the mother with the herd and that night rope the mothers and sideline them so they would not go back to where she hid the calf. That was a daily job.

These cattle were listed for Wind River, Montana, but then Mr. Newman changed his mind when we got to Dodge City. Tom Mahan, who was our foreman to Dodge City, turned the herd over to Ellis Chalk, my old school mate, and we drove the cattle over to Ellis, Kansas, where we held them to fatten them.

That's the year the U. P. Express was robbed at Big Springs, Nebraska of 60,000 dollars in 20 dollar gold pieces and Potts and Collins, being two of the robbers were killed, having with them \$20,000.

I went back to Texas. . . . Done the trail the next year, 1878, with the same foreman, T. J. Mahan, who drove a herd for Major J. S. Smith and Bob Savage, the former from Bates, Illinois and Mr. Savage of Corpus Christi. . . . I helped gather a couple of trainloads of four year old beevies shipped from Julesburg to Chicago. When I came back I quit, much to the discomfiture of Mr. Snyder who said he intended to give me a permanent job, but I decided to go where my old school mate was and that was Ellis Chalk who was working for E. S. Newman and Hunter, the latter also of St. Louis, Missouri. Newman and Hunter had the contract of furnishing the Sioux Indians at Pine Ridge and Rosebud agencies with cattle, 250 head every 10 days at each agency, and what we called a dry issue—in December to last them through till we could gather cattle for the spring issue.

And the Indians done their own delivery as long as they had any cattle. They generally run short and we had to supply more. After Newman and Hunter had filled their contract, they, of course, returned to their individual ranches. Mr. Newman was located on the Running Water, south of Gordon at the mouth of Antelope Creek. Mr. Newman who ran the N Bar Ranch drove his cattle west when the big ranches were run out of the Sandhills by the settlers. I remained in the country and a short time afterwards went into business for myself. In 1910 I went to El Paso, and who should I find but Mr. E. S. Newman and his brother Tom. I talked with Mr. Newman and as he had been all over the world, I asked him if he ever found any range that would equal the sandhills of Nebraska and he said no. I left El Paso and I have never seen him since. He was a fine man and all of his boys liked him.

An article in the Gordon, Nebraska *Journal* Sept. 18, 1941, gives more interesting data on these early-day ranches:

The first ranch in the Gordon locality, according to Benjamin Robins, Rushville, was the Newman ranch established in 1878 by E. S. and H. L. Newman. During the same year, the Hunter Ranch [The present Buff Tinnin place], was established by Dave and Bob Hunter, and a man who Mr. Robins remembered simply as Mr. Evans.

The home ranch of the Newman outfit was located at the mouth of Antelope Creek about twelve miles southeast of Gordon, but Mr. Newman had a small house sixty miles south of there. The range was approximately twenty miles east and west and seventy miles north and south. Billy Irwin, a Texas cowboy, was the first foreman of the ranch; his brother, Bennett Irwin taking charge later. The first foreman of Hunter's ranch was Will Whitaker.

<sup>14</sup> James C. Dahlman, "Recollections of Cowboy Life in Western Nebraska," *Nebraska History*, Vol. X, Oct.-Dec., 1927, pp. 335.

<sup>15</sup> Lillian Robins Amende, "Early Day History of Sheridan County, Nebraska," *Sheridan County Star*, Rushville, Neb., Feb. 20, 1936.



CATTLE CROSSING the Powder River at the old N Bar Ranch about 1885. John O. Bye, Montana pioneer, said in his "Back Trailing in the Heart of the Short Grass Country" that a year after this picture was taken the ranch branded over 7,000 calves and had 6,000 steers, heifers and other stock as well. The famed N-Bar, started by the Newmans, was sold to Thomas Cruse of Helena after the "hard winter" of 1886-87, then to the Holter family of Helena and Austin B. Warr, and finally in 1929 to F. B. Milburn, whose brother, Jack, is now the astute general manager.

From 30,000 to 50,000 head of cattle were run on the ranges of each of these ranches, most of them being trailed up from Texas or from eastern Oregon. These cattle were marketed at Pine Ridge under Indian contract or were shipped to Chicago.

During the year three roundups were held, spring roundup, calf roundup and fall roundup. Representatives (reps) from all outfits—even from great distances—were present in the interest of their companies. Cattle were not fed in the winter, but foraged over the range and after a severe winter, the stockman could not reckon his loss until after the spring roundup.

The winters of 1879, 1880 and 1884, Mr. Robins recalls as especially cold and stormy resulting in heavy losses to cattlemen. When Mr. Newman closed his ranch here and moved his cattle to Montana, according to his books he was short about 10,000 head. Mr. Robins who worked for Newman from 1880 to 1882, remembers some of the men who were with that outfit: James C. Dahlman, Ed Ross, Johnny Burgess, Archie Reardon, George Parker, Harry Ruttger, John Green, Bob Miller, Bill Ellis, Harry Landers, Andy Wheat and Stonewall Irwin. Tom Quigley, who was known on the Newman Ranch as Tom Allen, was brand inspector at Pine Ridge.

This information was evidently taken from an earlier story by Lillian Amende, a daughter of Benjamin Robins, whom the writer visited in May, 1952, and who gave him a copy of the article.<sup>15</sup>

John O. Bye, Montana pioneer who has recorded many of his rich reminiscences, says in his book *Back Trailing in the Heart of the Short Grass Country*:

Frank Murphy, later of Mizpah and Miles City, in 1882 helped trail 15,000 cattle from the Grande Ronde country of Oregon, in five herds for Zeke Newman's outfit. Jim Dahlman, later in Nebraska and for 20 years mayor of Omaha, was one of the foremen of the drive and Jesse Hastings was general manager. All 15,000 head had to be roped head and heels and thrown to put the N Bar on one side and also flopped over

for an N Bar on the other side. This was in Oregon before the five herds of 3,000 each started on their journey to the short grass country. First they branded in corrals, and when the grass got short near the corrals the work was done on the open range. The work was done by the team roping method—one catching the animal by the head and the other heeling the same animal. The raw brands made the cattle move around at night and so were harder to hold. When the herds arrived at the Pumpkin Buttes in northern Wyoming, one herd was trailed on to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. The other herds were taken down Little Powder to its mouth, then up Big Powder to the mouth of Cache Creek in Montana. The time from the start to Oregon until Cache Creek was reached on the return trip was eight months. Billie Irvine and Harry Rutter were two N Bar cowboys as was also Mesquite Bill.

In 1884, the N Bar trailed two herds of cattle up to the mouth of the Musselshell, 200 miles; 2,000 steers in each herd. Then they began to run this as a third outfit. John Sherman McCumsey, the last of the McCumsey brothers who came to the Belle Fourche country above de Mores (Belle Fourche) in the early 80s, worked for the N Bar in the late 80s. In his many letters to me, over the past seven years or so, John has told me much about his early day cowboy experience. He states that this outfit had the best bunch of saddle horses he had ever ridden—some southern ponies were from Old Mexico, Texas and Arizona and some Oregon horses. In 1886 John says the N Bar branded over 7,000 calves, besides having 6,000 spayed heifers, steers and other stock. In 1889, two years after the "hard winter," they were only able to gather 6,000 head to trail to Flat Willow, Montana to deliver to Thomas Cruse of Helena to whom they sold out. Ed Ross, John Caldwell, Johnnie Burgess and George Mitchell were some of the trail bosses John remembers or had worked under. Mitchell, he recalls as one of the finest trail bosses.

So the great Newman Ranches passed on to other owners. The Newman families went on to El Paso to engage in real estate and banking in that thriving city, their far-sighted contributions to the cattle industry all but forgotten.

The sequel to the Newman story is the famed N-Bar brand of Montana, acquired, along with 6,000 cattle, from E. S. Newman in 1887 or 88 by Thomas Cruse, the Marysville, Montana Gold king. From this nucleus it grew into one of north central Montana's greatest spreads, located along the banks of Flat Willow Creek and the gentle foothills of the Snowy Mountains.

At one time the N-Bar outfit grazed 35,000 sheep and 15,000 cattle with a ranch force of 30 or more herders and up to 40 cowboys. Tommy Cruse built his land holdings until he had more than 19,000 acres of deeded land. But this was only a portion of the 50,000 or more acres of free prairie and mountain grass, unfenced and there for the grazing. Stock from these ranges were drifted to markets at Miles City, Forsyth and Glendive, trail drive distances up to 225 miles.

Thomas Cruse, that adventuresome financier, native of Ireland and locator of the incredible Drumlummon Gold Mine at Marysville, after some thirty years of building up the N Bar ranch, in 1909 sold it to Antone Holter and his son, Norman B., members of the pioneer business family of Helena, along with Austin W. Warr, a central Montana business man and banker. Warr received a fourth interest, with the Holters buying the remaining interest. The Holters and Warr incorporated under the name Judith Farms Company, and soon began subdividing the ranch into 160-acre farms.

Mormons from Canada came in under a colonization plan. Plans were even drawn for a town to be named Warr, which was to be located along Flat Willow Creek about four miles east of the present headquarters ranch. Besides stores and a post office it was to have a creamery where milk, cream and other farm produce could be sold. But the scheme failed. Creeks were unable to furnish enough water for the heavy irrigation of the proposed farming land alongside Flat Willow Creek

and when the farmers tried dry farming on the higher land, they found the going even tougher. Many settlers moved in between 1919 and 1928 but most of them got so far behind on their land payments they were not even paying what would amount to rent after a few years.

In 1929 F. B. Milburn bought out the Warr interests. A year later, his brother, G. R. (Jack) Milburn, became general manager. At this time the N-Bar ranch consisted of 10,000 acres of land, 2,500 sheep and 15 cows of mixed breeding. Jack Milburn wisely began to turn the land back into range. The number of sheep speedily increased to 9,000, before labor and range shortages caused a gradual selling out which was completed in 1946. The number of cattle also gradually increased and now a thousand cows calve out each spring. The N-Bar ranch boasted one of the earliest herds of Aberdeen Angus cattle in Montana, a purebred herd of great reputation, started through a wintering and grazing arrangement with W. S. Acton of the Airyland Stock Ranch.

A modest 102 purebred Angus were the start of the present N-Bar herd of 250 purebred and 750 commercial Angus cattle. During the time the herd was increasing, additional land was obtained. Today's ranch, one of the show places of Montana, encompasses 30,000 acres of deeded land and an additional 10,000 acres of leased land.

Thus the old N Bar ranch has come full circle to complete almost a century of activity since the Newman brothers saw the possibilities of the northern short grass ranges. It is indeed a long trail in the cattle industry since the early Dons of California and the Texans had little to sell save hides and tallow, on through the first Montana gold strikes in the 1860's when pioneers like Con Kohrs butchered cattle to provide meat to the miners during the day and then sat up nights making candles out of the tallow separated from the red meat.

# John Bull In the Cowmen's West

THE STORY of Moreton Frewen represents only one facet of an era which saw an avalanche of eager foreign investors, both individual and corporate, pour millions of pounds sterling into the Western territories of the United States. And circumstances combined, after 1865, to bring most of them from the British Isles—English, Irish and Scot.

British capital had been finding its way west with some regularity since 1815, the attractions ranging from the fur trade period to mining (after the California gold discoveries of 1849); finally to the westward expanding railroads; and then in the 1870's to what looked like the biggest profit-maker of all: cattle which magically fattened on the free grasses of this unfenced paradise.

"The [English] drawing room buzzed with the stories of this last of bonanzas," John Clay wrote in 1924 in *MY LIFE ON THE RANGE*, "staid old gentlemen who scarcely knew the difference betwixt a steer and heifer discussed it over their port and nuts."

It was an investment opportunity ready-made for Victorian England. The French and Germans, occupied with internal problems, did not have large amounts of surplus capital. The Britons did. And a series of laws passed by Parliament speedily led to the establishment of investment trusts, whereby great amounts of capital could be put to use abroad.

When economic stabilization came to America after the Civil War and the railroads had probed all the way Westward, John Bull began sending emissaries to look over the expanding country. Some were tourists, adventurers and meat-hungry hunters, but many were eager representatives of British and Scottish combines.

A built-in local demand for beef occurred during the 1860's when native British herds were attacked by anthrax. Soon there came effective refrigeration of not only railroad cars but ocean-going ships as well, giving great impetus to world export and import. And although at first discounted, reports that cattle could be raised in Western America with almost unbelievable profit became more persistent, even from conservative sources.

These factors combined to bring on a boom—indeed, almost a frenzy—among British individuals and syndicates. John Macdonald, an agricultural expert on the staff of the *EDINBURGH SCOTSMAN*, made a fact-gathering trip to American packing plants and cattle-raising areas in 1877. Although his report was typically Scot in its cautious phrases, it held out more than enough promise to excite investors. Two years later, the report of two Royal Agricultural Commissioners, Clare Read and Albert Pell, was even more encouraging. "Self-made hay on the great prairies of Texas, Colorado and Wyoming" was there for the taking, the two reported.

Many individual Scotsmen began entering the U. S. livestock scene and many achieved notable success. But generally, the individual Englishman was like Moreton Frewen—not nearly as businesslike or agriculturally attuned as the Scots, and more inclined to gravitate to the business in a spirit of fun, adventure and romance or to bolster a Victorian social status that had begun to falter a bit back home.

Thus the great British-American cattle companies, heavily capitalized and usually managed by professional cattlemen, had great significance in the West. Profits between 1877 and 1882 are variously quoted from 100 to even 500 percent on the millions in capital they subscribed to carry on their farflung cattle operations.



A great many factors, most of them inevitable in the scheme of things, finally combined to end this golden era. Conflicting policies and interests of the British directors and American managers became more and more troublesome. There was an outbreak of disease—notably pleuro-pneumonia and "Texas fever"—and the press in America was becoming sharply critical of the excessive land holdings of foreign interests.

Inevitably the U. S. market would be glutted with cattle and prices would fall. Cooler heads were beginning to realize, too, that free grass had been overgrazed to the point of exhaustion—even in Wyoming and Montana. Soon there were frantic maneuvers northward into Canada to find more range.

The winter of 1884-85 was severe, especially in the Southwest, and the year 1885 proved to be disastrous, price-wise. Financial reports of the foreign companies were becoming ever more cautious, then openly discouraging. Then came the terrible winter of 1886-87, with its alternate freezes and chinooks, to sound the death knell of the open range. These great lands were generally fenced, the breeding of cattle was controlled to avoid calving during the winter, and the day of the giant cattle outfits, including the foreign-financed, drew to an end.

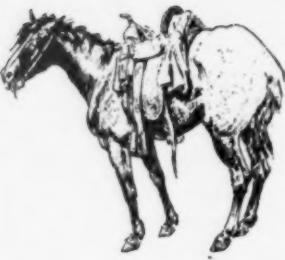
R. G. Athearn's book *WESTWARD THE BRITON*, tells the social history of these Englishmen and their tragic-comic story in the frontier West with great gusto. Summarizing the Briton who came West, Athearn wrote: "They came to like the openness, the straight-forwardness which they met . . . Most of all, the British liked the general feeling of optimism, of hope, and of confidence that pervaded the air. At home, society had settled down into rigid stratification while economic possibilities were ever-tightening. As young men watched the competition for places in the civil service, the military, or in the professions, growing steadily more fierce, they looked out and beyond. To them, just as to the Easterner in America, the West beckoned tantalizingly, and toward it they hurried, fearful that it would soon fall under the quieting cloak of civilization. In a society that was Victorian, there were many members who, in their desire for expansion and opportunity, were Elizabethan . . . Those of them who knew the West, looked with reluctance upon the disappearance of the endless seas of grass, the limitless forests, and the unpolluted streams, but they did not necessarily go along with the myth that the conquest of this vast domain had been effected by a race of supermen whose accomplishments arose out of a combination of unusual native ability and the blessings of a democratic form of government. They were certain that, given the tools, any Englishman could have done the job."

Appraising the John Bull cattlemen in *WHEN GRASS WAS KING*, W. Turrentine Jackson makes this observation: "The British not only provided the resources for the most adequate tests of large-scale cattle operations in the 1880's, but in more recent years they made a significant contribution in improving breeding, transportation and marketing operations essential to the industry. The splendid reputation that the Scottish rancher enjoys in the cattle country to the present day is undoubtedly based upon his historic contribution."

Moreton Frewen's Wyoming experience, which follows, was not necessarily typical. But it does represent a microcosmic study of this fascinating aspect of the day of the cattleman. . .



# Moreton Frewen: Cattle King With Monocle



by ERNEST M. RICHARDSON

THE POWDER River cow country was still wild when the vanguard of the British investment invasion reached there late in 1878. But the American wilderness was not a new or novel experience for the likes of these Britishers. Englishmen had been pushing into the wilder parts of the North American continent for well over two-hundred and fifty years.

In December, 1878, the two Frewen brothers, with a couple of hunting companions, plowed through the snow-choked passes over the Big Horns from the west and looked down at the Powder River valley of Wyoming. Moreton Frewen was just 25 years old; Richard, a couple of years younger. In his memoirs, Moreton tells what they saw:

Never such a view as we saw . . . after coming through the pass. Two hundred miles south, Laramie Peak; to the east, limitless prairie, the course of the Powder showing in its broad belt of cottonwoods fading out in the far distance. To the northwest we could see . . . up to the Montana frontier, a full two hundred miles. Not a human habitation . . . no cattle . . .

They were seeing the valley just as the Indians had left it less than two years before. In working their way down the eastern slopes of the Big Horns they had trudged over the very spot from which Dull Knife and his Cheyennes had been driven in November, 1876. From their look-out point they could see the country where hostile Sioux under Crazy Horse had been ousted only 19 months before. Less than a hundred and fifty miles to the north lay the bloody ridge above the squirming Little Big Horn River where Custer and his command had been wiped out by the hostile redskins exactly two-and-a-half years before.

Now the Powder River valley lay before them, big, empty, peaceful. The Indians were gone; the whites had not yet come. In another dozen years or so, things would be different—whites against whites—but now, in December of 1878, all was serene.

We know but little about Richard Frewen; he left no diaries, wrote no books. He died a dozen or so years after he first came to the Powder; died at sea, so they tell us, many thousands of miles from the Powder River.

Moreton Frewen, however, is a well-documented character. He kept diaries, wrote many letters, published a volume of memoirs. And he had some writing relatives. His daughter became a noted sculptress, newspaper correspondent, and writer. In her writings she has given us an intimate word portrait of her father. Shane Leslie, nephew of Moreton's wife, became a famous Irish poet and writer, and in two of his books he has left us excellent character sketches of Uncle Moreton. Shane Leslie's daughter, Anita, has published a biography of Moreton's father-in-law, Leonard Jerome. In this book she devotes much space to the study of Moreton and his wife.

So, we have abundant sources upon which to draw for a character study of

MORETON FREWEN, pictured in his later life, still shows the handsome flair of his youth. Photo by courtesy of the Denver Public Library, Western Collection.

this remarkable Britisher, promoter extraordinary, builder of the first big foreign-owned cattle outfit in Wyoming north of the North Platte.

Before Moreton Frewen first saw the Powder River valley, the feverish excitement of the great "Cattle Bonanza" had already climbed upward toward its peak. South of the Platte, in the grass-carpeted valleys and on the rolling plains to the north and west of Cheyenne, and in the grazing country east of the Rockies in Colorado, hordes of Queen Victoria's more venturesome subjects were gathering. Some had already gone into the cow business; many more were coming. Easy money and high adventure seemed to beckon, and no true Victorian Empire Builder could resist such a call.

They came, and they brought along great sheafs of English letters of credit representing millions of pounds sterling; good British capital to be invested in the American West, where the grass was free and the stock cattle cheap. On the High Plains many of them would build the good life—and earn a snug return of twenty to forty per cent each year for their eager investors back home. They couldn't possibly miss. This they could prove by the printed prospectuses.

What young Moreton Frewen saw that sparkling December morning as he stood high on the slopes of the Big Horns looking over the broad valley spread out before him, triggered his irrepressible imagination. Throughout his life, this tall blonde Englishman would be stimulated by the bigness and broadness of things; by the possibilities he saw, or imagined he saw; by the golden pot at the end of every rainbow.

This was the kind of country he'd been looking for and dreaming about ever since early the previous spring,



when he spent a month in the Texas Panhandle visiting with his English friend, General Adair, and with cattle-wise old Charley Goodnight at the Adair ranch in Palo Duro Canyon.

Young Moreton Frewen's plans shaped up quickly. He always moved fast; not always in the right direction, but never hesitatingly. An unfriendly critic would say of him, many years later, that he had a first class mind, untroubled by second thoughts. And his American father-in-law would characterize him as a thwarted Elizabethan who worked like a typist, lived like a dreamer, and travelled like a king.

Frewen had a sizeable bank-roll when he picked the location for his cow coun-

This is our third article by the late Ernest M. Richardson of Pacific Palisades, Calif., an investment banker who devoted his retirement to western history, with emphasis on Montana and Wyoming. "The Forgotten Haycutters at Fort C. F. Smith" appeared in our summer, 1959, issue, and a year later we published his appraisal of the Battle of Lightning Creek, a subject of personal interest since Mr. Richardson's father-in-law, Sheriff Billy Miller of Weston County, Wyo., was a victim of that Indian-white fracas. The author's unexpected death occurred early in 1960, and we are grateful to his widow for permission to publish this story of a colorful Britisher's Wyoming adventures.

try operations in the valley of the Powder. Before he reached the spot where he would build his ranching headquarters, splendidous plans had already begun to form in his mind. He would need more capital, much more capital than the piddling \$80,000 in his bank account.

He envisioned an empire of free grass, where a hundred thousand head of Frewen cattle would graze on a Frewen range with dimensions running into the hundreds of miles. Millions of dollars of capital would be required!

This money would have to come from England. To get it he must first have a going concern: a showcase, a sort of three dimensional prospectus.

So Moreton Frewen set out to build his showcase on the left bank of the Powder; to build it big, luxurious, magnificent. An unfriendly editorial writer, eight years later, viewing the carcass of Frewen's dead horse with the usual penetrating editorial hindsight, would describe Moreton's showcase as "a princely establishment on the frontier that would have bankrupted Monte Cristo."

The "princely establishment," when completed in the summer of 1879, was located just below the junction of the North and Middle Forks, a hundred yards back from the river and seventy feet above it.

The ranch house was a square, two story structure, measuring about sixty feet on each side. The walls were of thick hand-hewn pine logs, snaked down from the foothills ten miles away. Across the front, facing northwest toward the mountains, was a broad veranda; at the rear, overlooking the river, a smaller veranda.

The outside of the house was not particularly impressive when viewed from a distance; but later, when homesteaders' and ranchers' squatly little cabins began to break the monotony of the empty landscape, the house seemed big and magnificent by contrast. In his memoirs Frewen tells us that the "river folk" called it *The Castle*.

Stepping inside the front entrance one got the first bold impression of space. The main room was forty feet square, with two huge fireplaces. A wide, solid walnut stairway led up to a mezzanine balcony and on to the second floor sleeping rooms. Off the main room on the first floor were an office and library, a small cozy sitting room, and a small dining room. A large kitchen and pantry completed the first floor.

All interior finish was of the best grade of hardwood, imported from England. Hardware, windows, doors, shingles, were shipped from Chicago and freighted in to the ranch from the railroad.

The year 1879 was a time of energetic and diversified activity. Lavish furnishings for the house were hauled in by ox-teams from the Union Pacific's Rock Creek station, 200 miles to the south. Two thousand head of short-horns and the "76" brand were bought from Tim Foley on the Sweetwater and trailed to the Frewen range. Fred G. S. Hesse, another young Englishman, whose name was to become famous along the Powder, was hired as ranch foreman, and a crew of cow hands recruited. Corrals, stables, bunkhouses, and other outbuildings were erected; supplies for the humans, and feed for the work stock, freighted in. Ranchers, like military men, had to solve the problem of logistics. Through it all, Moreton Frewen, suave and self-assured, was giving a free rein to his wide-ranging mind.

The Cheyenne country papers, noting the activities, gave the Frewens many columns of glorious publicity. And how Moreton loved publicity! As early as January, 1879, the local press stated that he had already bought 10,000 head of Montana cattle. In April, one paper reported that he was trailing 7,000 head of Texas stock, and referred to the Frewens as "wealthy capitalists" and "gentlemen of business acumen."

During the spring and early summer Moreton wrote many letters. In response to these invitations the first British guests began to arrive late in the

fall, in time for the hunting in the mountains. Moreton was ready for them.

The guest register that fall carried the names of Lords and Ladies, as well as plain "Misters" and "Esquires"; all the hard-riding, fox-chasing, horse-loving, sportive friends of the Frewen boys from the hunting shires of England. The guests were met at the railroad, hauled over the long rough trail to the ranch in comfortable carriages pulled by relays of good fast horses, and then exposed to the magic of Moreton Frewen's super-salesmanship.

Service equal to that of any royal hunting lodge awaited them when the guests reached the ranch. Butlers, maids, valets, continental chefs, served them with vintage wines, whiskeys, English ale, liqueurs, and the choicest foods. Pack trips took them into the mountains with pack horses, excellent mounts, guides, tents, beds, portable bath tubs, and stout wagons to haul hunting trophies to the railroad.

Lean, leather-faced cow pokes viewed these strange goings on with open-mouthed amazement, sometimes with a bit of raucous laughter, frequently even with a touch of ill-concealed irritation.

Before the well-heeled guests departed they were always taken on a tour of the Frewen ranges. There they saw sleek shorthorns fattening on the free grass, a sight well calculated to make any profit-loving, beef-hungry Britisher drool, and eager to join up in the financing of such an obviously profitable venture.

More titled and moneyed Englishmen came the next year, and the next. Improvements continued. A postoffice and general store was established twenty miles down river where the old Bozeman Trail crosses the Powder. A telephone line was built—the first one in Wyoming north of the Platte—linking the ranch with the store, and with the outside world through the connecting military telegraph line.

Moreton Frewen was a busy young man, making innumerable trips across

the Atlantic, expanding his cattle operations, entertaining his swarms of important visitors. He took an active part in the move to get a county government established. He became an early member of the famous Cheyenne Club and of the already powerful Wyoming Stockgrowers' Association. He built a packing plant atop Sherman Hill, the highest point on the Union Pacific, planning to by-pass the meat packers' trust. He set up feeding pens in the Nebraska corn country. As a side-line—he always had a side-line—he became a vigorous and loquacious advocate of the free and unlimited coinage of silver, thereby endearing himself to the silver-state Senators and other proponents of that controversial monetary theory.

Moreton Frewen, young and handsome, was a charming extrovert, and an avid name-dropper. He was proud of the many important people he knew. He tells, in his memoirs, about a meeting with Woodrow Wilson in later years, at which time he told the President that he, Moreton, had had the honor of shaking the hand of every one of Wilson's predecessors since James Buchanan. Swallowing this one may be a little difficult when one figures that Abraham Lincoln was dead long before Moreton Frewen first crossed the Atlantic, and we can find no record of a Lincoln visit to England!

Among the important people Frewen met in New York was a distinguished gentleman, Leonard Jerome, a millionaire speculator, sportsman, and newspaper man and the father of three very lovely daughters who had been brought up and educated in Europe under their mother's supervision. It is said that Mrs. Jerome had taken the daughters to Europe because of papa's unseemly interest in a beautiful lady of the stage.

This decision on the part of Leonard's wife may well have been one of the turning points in the history of the world: although Leonard was as American as apple pie, not a one of his many grandchildren and great-grandchildren are Americans. All three of his daugh-



THREE LOVELY DAUGHTERS of Leonard Jerome, all of whom married British husbands, are shown in this picture from the Denver Public Library, Western Collection. Jennie, at the left, became Lady Churchill and the mother of Sir Winston. Clara, center, married Moreton Frewen and came as a bride to his fabled "Castle on the Powder" in the spring of 1881. Leonie, right, the youngest of the three, married Sir John Leslie and became the mother of Shane Leslie, noted Irish poet and author.

ters married Britishers. In 1873 his second daughter, Jennie, met a young English politician by the name of Randolph Churchill, son of the Duke of Marlborough. An authentic romance developed and, despite the active opposition of the Duke and a notable lack of enthusiasm on the part of Jennie's papa, they were married early in 1874. Their first-born son arrived in November, 1874, and was christened Winston *Leonard Spencer Churchill* — one of Britain's immortals.

Early in 1881, with his affairs at the ranch going well, Moreton Frewen made one of his frequent trips east. At that time he was introduced to Leonard Jerome's eldest daughter, Clara, a lovely blue eyed, ash blonde spinster of thirty-one. Clara fell hard for this tall, tanned Britisher the moment he strode magnificently into her presence. They were married at Grace Church in New York in April.

Leonard Jerome draped an expensive string of diamonds about the bride's dainty neck and provided the happy couple with a comforting allowance of \$30,000 a year.

Later, the old man would cut Moreton out of the Jerome will after learning that the son-in-law had sold Clara's necklace to raise money then needed for one of his tenuous business schemes. But checks for the allowance kept on coming to Clara.

The newlyweds, with their mountains of luggage and a badly frightened French maid, boarded a train for the long railroad trip to Rock Creek. The

blissfully happy bride was placidly confident of her husband's ability to get them there, surely and safely. She was deeply in love.

The little French maid was in love with no one at the moment. As the train lurched westward into the unknown, she peered fearfully through the grimy sleeping car windows, her cheeks pale, lips trembling. She fully expected a scalping party of wild Indians to attack every time the train came to a jerky stop.

The guest book for 1881 was crowded with important names: Sir Samuel Baker, noted African explorer, with Lady Baker; Lords Gordon, Granville, Donoughmore, Mayo; Horace Porter, Horace Towler, T. Porter-Porter; Mr. and Mrs. Henry Gaskill; and Louise Frewen, sister of the Frewen brothers. There were gay parties, sumptuous dinners. Officers and their ladies came from Fort McKinney, resplendent in dress uniforms and low-cut gowns. Wagons rumbled in from the railroad, loaded with cut flowers from Denver hothouses. There was music and dancing, polo games on the prairie, safaris into the Big Horns.

Toward the end of 1881 Moreton planned to go London for the launching of the big British-financed corporation which would take over his holdings, furnish him with adequate capital, and speed him on to riches in the cow business. Two things delayed him. First, for some undisclosed reason, brother Richard wanted out, so Moreton purchased his brother's interest. The second delay was caused by Clara's pregnancy. He postponed the trip to London until the following spring, then he set out for New York with Clara. She

wanted to have her baby in New York. Apparently the long rough coach trip to the railroad was too much, and the baby was stillborn at Cheyenne. Ten days later they went on to New York, and Moreton sailed for England a few days later.

After lengthy negotiations in London, the Powder River Cattle Company, Ltd., was chartered on August 5, 1882, capitalized for three hundred thousand English Pounds—a million-and-a-half American dollars at the current rate of exchange. Two-thirds of the shares were "ordinary," or common; one-third "preferred."

For his inventory of approximately \$260,000 worth of livestock and other property, Moreton received \$60,000 cash and \$200,000 in "ordinary" shares of stock. He was to get no salary, but his contract called for him to receive one-third of the increase in the net worth of the corporation at the end of the first five-year period, after the shareholders had received 10% dividends. He could sell no more than half of his shares during that five-year period. He never did sell any of his stock. Top management of the corporation was vested in a board of directors headed by His Grace the Duke of Manchester, as chairman.

Moreton Frewen, now backed by a million-and-a-half dollars, cut quite a figure when he got back to Cheyenne in late mid-summer. The Cheyenne papers lauded him, and he spent many happy hours at the swank Cheyenne Club soaking up admiration. With baronial assurance he strode into the banking quarters of Morton E. Post & Company and deposited \$600,000 of company funds, thereby earning the extra special homage which Mr. Post reserved for his biggest depositors. The banker was not only one of the leaders in the cow country capital, he was also Wyoming's Territorial Representative in the U. S. Congress. Not a bad man to know.

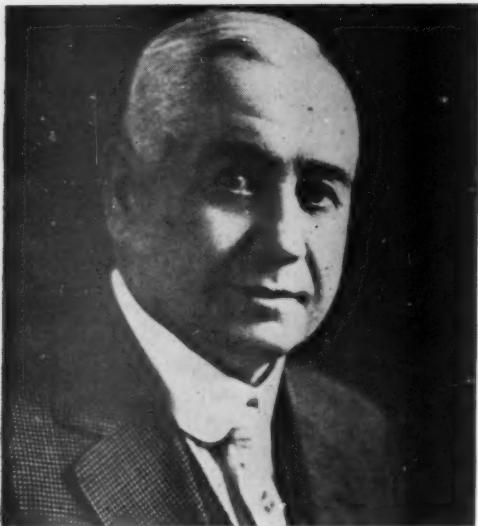
Back on the Powder the cattle business moved forward under the capable

supervision of Fred Hesse, ably assisted by Mrs. Hesse's brother-in-law, E. W. Murphy. Hesse, too, was a busy young man. In addition to running the "76," he had started his own outfit—the "28"—thus laying the foundation for his own success in the cow business.

Now Moreton really was busy. In 1883 he trailed in 50,000 head of Nebraska and Oregon cattle, and imported fifty head of pure-bred Sussex bulls. His cattle, bearing the "76" brand, ranged a vast domain—from Teapot Dome on the south to the Tongue River on the north; from the Hole-in-the-Wall on the West to the Black Hills on the east. He personally supervised his slaughtering operations on Sherman Hill, built feed yards and a slaughter plant at Superior, Wisconsin, on the Great Lakes, from which to ship dressed beef by refrigerated boats to England; and looked after his feeding pens in the Nebraska corn belt, when time permitted.

In his January, 1884 report he noted the branding of 9,824 calves the previous spring and termed this "a legitimate cause for congratulation." Later in 1884 he was selected by the Wyoming Stockgrowers' Association as spokesman for that organization in an appeal to the Privy Council in London seeking a lifting of the embargo against the importation of live cattle from America.

This latter endeavor, which was not successful, seems to indicate the already growing concern among cattlemen about the overstocked condition of the northern ranges. Moreton tells us that grazing conditions were poor and getting worse; that talk "around our pleasant Cheyenne Club" was gloomy. Trail drivers from Texas, unable to find satisfactory markets for their beef at the railheads, were bringing more and more cattle to the Wyoming and Montana ranges. President Cleveland added to the seriousness of the problem by ordering all range cattle off the Indian lands in the Indian Territory. These



COL. MORTON E. POST, head of one of Wyoming's leading banks, was also Territorial representative in Congress. Frewen deposited his first company funds at Post's bank, and later the bank honored his note for \$100,000 pending arrival of a draft from England, a draft which never came when British directors of the company lost faith in their visionary young manager. (U. of Wyo. photo).

displaced longhorns were also spilling over into the northern range country.

The beef packers in Chicago had noted Frewen's slaughtering operations, and slashed their prices in his territory making it impossible for him to compete.

Giving a free rein to his imagination, Frewen came bounding back with a plan. He would move his herds to better grass. So he rushed off to Canada and negotiated with the Dominion government for a twenty-year lease on 80,000 acres of good grazing lands in the province of Alberta. Later events seem to prove that this was an excellent idea, but at the time Moreton couldn't sell the plan to his absentee board in far-aff London. These gouty old men, five thousand miles away from the over-grazed ranges of the American West—men who didn't know buffalo grass from buffalo chips—turned down his plan. In 1887, when it was too late for anything to be salvaged out of the company wreckage, the liquidator of the corporation would have this to say in his report: "It is only fair to Mr. Frewen to acknowledge that the course of events, both at Powder River and in Alberta, has to a certain extent justified the policy, which he so strenuously advocated, of moving the cattle to the latter territory."

Frewen not only "so strenuously advocated" his policy—he actually moved about a third of the cattle without awaiting London's approval.

The hassle, thus begun between Moreton Frewen and his London directors, threatened to break out into open corporate hostilities when Frewen vigorously opposed the payment of unearned dividends which the board was insisting on distributing. Moreton insisted that the money should be retained in the company treasury to meet the future crises which they would have to face because of grazing conditions. He could see his own potential profits in the company melting away. The cattle, he said, would starve to death on the denuded Wyoming and Montana ranges, while the other assets of the company were being frittered away through the payment of unearned and unjustified dividends. The London directors, with characteristic British stubbornness, turned him down on all counts.

They not only vetoed Frewen's sound operating and financial recommendations, they also refused to honor his draft for urgently needed operating cash. With his company's bank balance at Morton E. Post & Company in Cheyenne down near the zero point, Frewen had followed his established practice of drawing a draft on the company in London. He presented such a draft for \$100,000 to his banker friend, and Post let him sign a note for that amount, just to keep the books in balance while the draft was being sent to London for collection. Moreton then proceeded to write checks against the account to pay the company's bills.

Before news of London's refusal to honor the draft got back to Cheyenne the money had all been paid out, and

SIR HORACE PLUNKETT, another Britisher who engaged in the cattle business along the Powder River, took over management of Frewen's company in 1885 but its heyday was over and it went down to final ruin after the disastrous winter of 1886-87. (U. of Wyo. photo).

all the bank had to show for it was Moreton Frewen's name on a piece of paper. The note was never paid. It was among the assets turned over to the trustees when Morton Post's banking house folded in 1887. They tried to collect, but Moreton Frewen did not have, and never again would have, that kind of money.

Thus, in the spring of 1885, Frewen and his English directors had reached an impasse. He resigned so he could return to London and protect his interests through an action in a Court of Chancery.

Before he left the ranch on the Powder on June 24, 1885 Frewen made this note in the guest book: "Leaving . . . for England by way of Superior." Of his departure, he tells in his memoirs:

It was a perfect summer morning when I left, and, with quite a lump in my throat, I halted my horses on the ridge, and before passing forever out of sight, took a long last look at the good black and white house which the river folk called the Castle. It had proved a center for a very short-lived social system. I never revisited the spot.

In London, Frewen fought stubbornly, but quite unsuccessfully, to save the company. Sir Horace Plunkett, Moreton's erstwhile neighbor on the Powder—but never his friend—took over the management of the floundering company, and was profoundly unsuccessful. The big "freeze-up" winter of 1886-87 finished them off. Creditors were never paid in full, and the shareholders lost every dollar they'd put in. But along the Powder it was rumored, often quite openly, that not a few prosperous cattle outfits owed much of their prosperity to the inability of "76" calves to dodge the wide loops of the long-ropers.

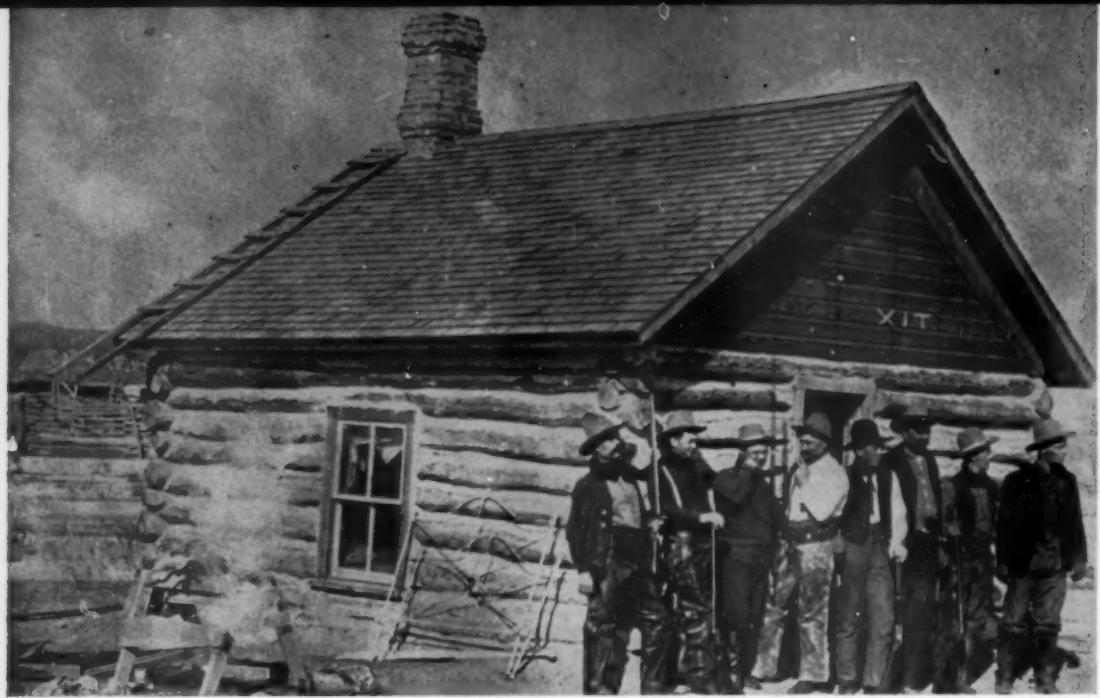
Moreton lived for thirty-nine years after his departure from the Powder. He died in 1924 at the age of 71, and was laid to rest among his ancestors at Northiam in Sussex County, England.



During those 39 years he ranged the world eagerly pursuing but never quite catching up with the riches he so much wanted.

Clara, too, who outlived him by eleven years, became adept at keeping up the good front. Once when bailiffs entered her London house to cart away some of their belongings and callers were arriving, she gave the officers five shillings each to pretend they were servants and open the door for the visitors. But one time the children heard her praying in the dark; praying that one, just one, of Moreton's business schemes would come out right!

Somehow I have the feeling these people and their illustrious descendants belong to the Powder River country. They seem to fit into that rugged land that lies spread out, like a carelessly dropped blanket, between the Big Horns and the Black Hills. No amount of paved roads and plowed fields and telephone lines and oil derricks and noisy cement mixers can completely cover up the rugged beauty of the pioneer landscape. And, no amount of twentieth century European culture can possibly erase the inherent toughness which these American-British pioneer cattlemen inherited, in part at least, from their rough, tough, old abolitionist grandfather, Leonard Jerome.



# Texas' Largest Ranch-- In Montana

by JOE B. FRANTZ

The Little-Known Story of the Treasure State  
Operations of the Gigantic XIT Spread and the  
Hardy Men Who Trialed Its Cattle Northward

ALTHOUGH THE Good Lord put considerable grass and weather between Montana and Texas, the two states have histories that frequently touch—and now and then actually overlap and intertwine. Consequently it is no surprise to some to learn that what at first glance seems like a strictly Texas story has a prominent Montana chapter.

When Texas decided to build its present state capitol in Austin, it had no money. To get the edifice erected, Texas advertised that it was prepared to give land to whomever would take on the construction chore. In Chicago a group of businessmen, led by a prominent wholesaler, John V. Farwell, made their bid, with the result that they were given 3,050,000 acres covering all or part of ten Texas Panhandle counties to fulfill the contract. None of the men

were ranchers or had any real connection with the ranching industry, but they did know how to operate for a profit; and this is exactly what they intended to do with what undoubtedly was for a couple of decades the largest ranch under fence in this nation. They named it the XIT—"ten in Texas."

After he became head of this gargantuan spread, Farwell experimented with test-feeding his Texas cattle on more northerly ranges from Kansas to the



XIT'S HATCHETT RANCH near Fallon, Montana, is pictured in the warmth of summer and the cold of a Montana winter in these pictures owned by Mrs. Vida Denby of Fallon, widow of Al Denby who appears in both pictures and who was the XIT's permanent Hatchett ranch man. Standing in front of the XIT bunkhouse on the spread in the summertime (opposite page) are, left to right, John Williams, Emmett Glidewell, Al Denby, Si Robinson, Lou Weisner, Bob Fudge, Bud Bird, and Charlie Clement. Some of the same men are pictured in the winter scene above. The first and seventh man, left to right, are unidentified; the others are: Denby, Weisner, Fudge, Clement, Glidewell and Bird.

Black Hills before he decided in 1890 to buy a small ranch sixty miles north of Miles City. Shortly he leased two million acres between the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers, giving XIT ownership a fabulous five million acres to oversee.

Word went down to the Texas Panhandle for the cowboys to start 10,000 head toward the Montana spread, where the cattle would be topped off before being sent into the Chicago market. Before this Montana range closed down two decades later, many an XIT cowboy had learned the route north from Buffalo Springs, the XIT collection spot just below the border of Oklahoma—or No Man's Land, as it was then known. Some of the hands became Montanans for life; to others it was always a foreign land, curious and likeable "but not the place to live."

Yet those men who rode the long and difficult 1,600 miles up the trail—across Colorado, Wyoming, and half of eastern Montana—never forgot it. And when years later the wife of the last XIT general manager, Mrs. Cordia Sloan Duke, started collecting the memories of the old XIT hands, their reminiscences were richly studded with tales of life beyond the Yellowstone.

There were all sorts of ways to get from Texas to Montana. Arch Sneed, who still lives down in Dalhart, Texas, took his first herd by rail instead of trail. He writes as follows:

"I left Middlewater with forty cars of steers and there were three other men with me. . . . We unloaded and fed at Lincoln, Nebraska, and rested the cattle. We had shipped over the Rock Island to Lincoln and went on the Chicago and Northwestern railroad from Council Bluffs, Iowa to Oakes, South Dakota. Then we went the Northern Pacific to Montana. We unloaded and fed at Jamestown, North Dakota and

Joe B. Frantz, chairman of the history department, University of Texas, wrote the accompanying article as a chapter for his new book, "Six Thousand Miles of Fence," published by the University of Texas Press this Summer. The book, as well as this article on Montana operations of the XIT, is the result of Dr. Frantz's collaboration with Mrs. Cordia Sloan Duke, wife of R. L. "Bob" Duke, last manager of the gigantic cattle operation. Mrs. Duke for many years kept a notebook in her apron pocket, encouraging reticent ranch hands to tell her their impressions of everyday life on the great ranch. Dr. Frantz is also the author of "Gail Borden: Dairyman to a Nation," which won the Texas Institute of Letters' Carr P. Collins Award for the best Texas book of 1951, and co-author, with Julian Ernest Choate, of "The American Cowboy: the Myth and the Reality," which appeared in 1955.



THE LAST ROUNDUP ON THE RANGE is the name Photographer G. V. Barker gave this startlingly beautiful picture of the last gathering of XIT horses in 1908 at the forks of Burns Creek 20 miles north of Glendive. Sixteen XIT men, led by Rufe Morris in the supply wagon, are herding 165 saddle ponies. The picture was taken against the sun, this combining with the white dust screen kicked up by the running

from there we went into Glendive where the cattle were unloaded on the south bank of the Yellowstone river and crossed on a toll bridge where they were turned loose. . . ."

His greeting was what impressed Emmett Glidewell most about Montana. A youth who had spent all his life on a farm about fifteen miles east of Graham, Texas, which was fairly settled country, he was sent by train to Montana. He saw his first XIT hands when the train stopped at Terry, Montana, where six or seven boys who had been to a dance the night before boarded his car. When the men got off at Fallon, they began a five-mile walk to meet the foreman, Bob Fudge, ferrying across the Yellowstone River on their way. It was a beautiful morning.

"About half way to the ranch we met Bob Fudge and the wagon. There on the wagon seat sat 245 pounds dressed in a fur coat and cap driving a big bay and a white horse; known to me later as Chunky and Eagle.

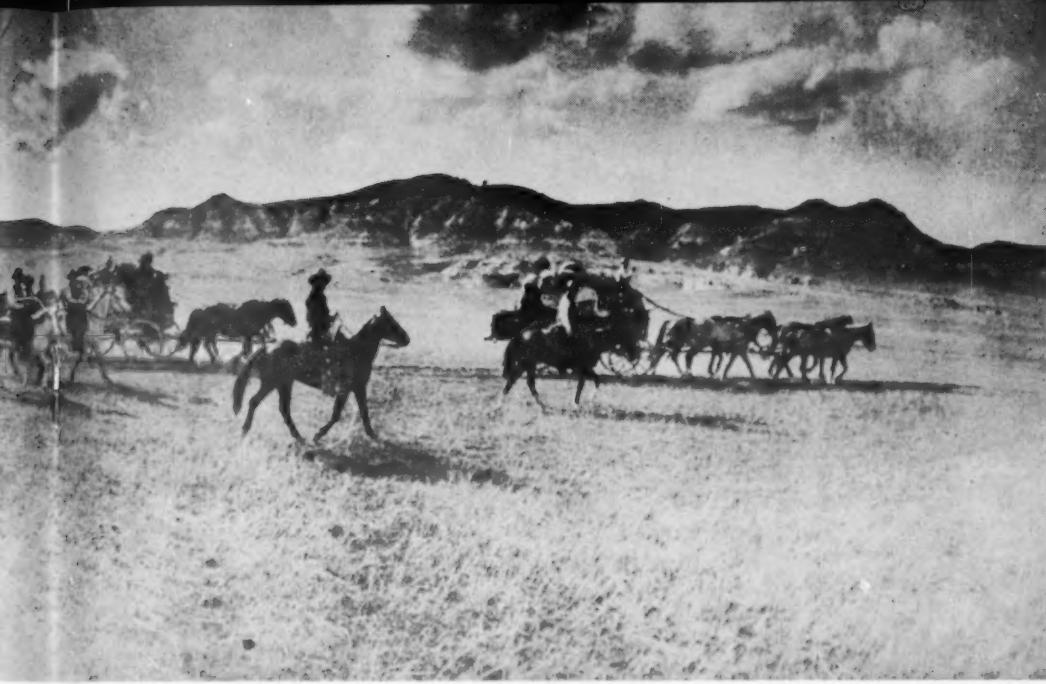
"He was pleased to see the Long boys coming back and he began to cuss them calling them names. I felt like crawling

under the wagon for fear he'd start on me next, as I had never heard greetings like that. We went on to the ranch and on the walls hung fur coats, fur caps and fur chaps. Montana seemed to me more wonderful than I had ever pictured it to be.

"We were all put on the payroll the first day of April, 1905. We were all Texas boys. O. C. Cato, the general manager, was from Texas, too. Our first work was to patch the mess tent and the bed tent. It took several days to gather the cow ponies for the spring roundup. At last the wagon pulled out; none more happy and excited than I."

Another Texan who made the trip north was A. L. Denby, who went north with the first herd of XIT cattle in the spring of 1890. The herd was split into three parts, with John Carlos trailing the lead herd, Ab Owings the second, and Bill Coats, Denby's boss, the third. Denby recalls:

"We loaded out of Channing [Texas] the tenth of May and shipped to Windowier [Wendover], Wyoming. We started out from there with instructions to drift north into Montana until stopped



horses to give the scene a ghost-like quality, a quality appropriate to the occasion, for this was nearly the end of the two-decade life of the XIT. Barker wrote on the back of the picture, recently acquired by the Historical Society of Montana: "This was the first time I was ever on the range and saw cowboys in action. It is the finest picture I took in 40 years at the business."

by George Findlay and O. C. Cato who had driven ahead in a buckboard to find a location. Findlay, manager of the Chicago office, supervised the starting of the herds and received them when they arrived in Montana.

"The herd was stopped on the head of Cedar Creek, Custer County, Montana, the first of August and turned loose there. We were all furnished with a horse apiece and a chuck wagon as far as Windover, Wyoming. From there we were given a pass back to Channing."

The next spring — 1891 — four herds were ready to be taken to Montana, this time to be trailed all the way. Again Denby had Bill Coats as his boss. The herd was taken into the No Man's Land strip, only to be turned back because of lack of permit.

Starting again, with "green broncs but one gentle night horse," the herd made it into Colorado, where a blizzard hit. Before it subsided, half the horses had been lost, though all the herd was saved. Finally the herd landed in Montana "with as many head as they started with."

Until 1909 Denby worked off and on for the XIT in Montana, his last job being that of ranchman and skiff man swimming herds across the treacherous Yellowstone.

"In those days," he remembers, "the Yellowstone was some river, big and very swift. If we got off to a good start the cattle were taken into swimming water by the cow punchers and two skiffmen could then handle them. Maybe have them across in thirty minutes. If they didn't get started before sun up or if there was a wind, it was sometimes pretty hard to get started. We would strip to our underclothes and take saddles from the horses and go in bareback. If a man had a green horse that had never worked in the river he was apt to go to lunging and sinking instead of swimming. Then the skiffs would have to rescue the man. Often when we got a bad start cowboys and horses had to swim to get across with the cattle. Late in October we would have to cross in a snow storm."

The man who left the most detailed account of XIT life in Montana is



J. K. Marsh, who practically left behind a guide to Eastern Montana range practices:

"The work on the open range plan in Montana was very different from the work in Texas, where all land was owned or controlled and fenced. The eastern division of the general roundup started at the mouth of Custer Creek on the Yellowstone, between the 20th and the 25th of May each year.

"In 1905 there was the XIT wagon with Rufe Morris, wagon boss, and captain of the roundup. As it was on XIT range, he planned all of the work, such as saying where they would round up and the XIT got all the mavericks.



J. K. MARSH, the man who left the most detailed account of life on great Eastern Montana ranches, came to Montana in 1904 and first worked for the CK outfit at Glendive. Unaccountably, this beloved cattleman was called "Buger Face" Marsh, according to Casey Barthelmes of Miles City, through whose cooperation most of the historic XIT pictures used with this article were gathered. This picture of Marsh, who died in 1938 and whose ashes were scattered by plane on the old XIT range north of Fallon, Mont., is owned by Ed Thompson of Terry, Mont.

"With the CK wagon with Dave Claire as wagon boss and the Buttlemen Pool wagon with Ernest Long as wagon boss, we worked down the Yellowstone to Deer Creek and met the Charley Creek (Pot Hound) Pool, H. A. Miller wagon boss, and the Bar Diamond, Frank Weinrich, wagon boss. Then we all worked together to Burns Creek and up the North Fork of Burns Creek to Fox Lake. Then over the divide onto East Redwater where Dave Claire took charge of the roundup.

"The Lazy J wagon, Hugh Exum, wagon boss, met us on East Redwater and we worked down East Redwater and up Redwater to the old Circle Ranch where we met the LU wagon, Lawrence H. Higgins, wagon boss, then the Pool and Bar Diamond wagons turned back.

"The rest of us worked on up Redwater to the head and down Timber Creek to the Big Dry then across to the Woody and down the Big Dry to the Missouri River. Then down it to Sand Creek and up the Divide to Nelson Lake and the finish and the outfits all scattered.

"I was working for the CK outfit at that time and I forgot to state that we met with the Hat X (Hugh Wells was range manager and Glenn Hollingsworth was wagon boss) on Hungry Creek and they worked with us to the finish.

"With five wagons working together, there were around 125 men on circle

JOHN V. FARWELL, enterprising Chicago businessman, headed a syndicate which agreed to accept the offer of Texas to build its capital in Austin in exchange for free land. The vast Texas Panhandle acreage thus controlled by these men became the original stomping grounds of the XIT ranch which once contained 5,000,000 acres of land in Texas and Montana.

EMMETT GLIDEWELL, veteran XIT hand, best remembered his raucous Montana greeting when he arrived from Texas by train at Fallon, Mont., early in 1905. A native of Greyford, near Graham, Texas, this authentic cowboy has made Montana his home since his arrival, now lives on a small ranch near Ismay. This picture, owned by Fred Glidewell, was taken in the Fall of 1941 when Emmett was 62 years old.

every morning and sometimes as many as 200 at the roundup as there were a lot of what we called dinner reps (small stockmen who lived in the vicinity and came to the roundup to get their cattle and usually borrowed a horse from some outfit and stayed for dinner and supper and got theirs branded and talked some cook out of a chuck of beef to take home).

"Redwater drains a country about 100 miles long and from 40 to 60 miles wide and with the big crews we circled both sides at the same time on the general roundup. I have seen day after day, working up Redwater where there would be an estimated 15,000 cattle on the roundup ground and where there were five wagons working together the roundup would be cut into five bunches. Each outfit would take a bunch and work and they would follow each other from one roundup to another until everybody was through. They would cut out the cows and calves first into a common bunch and a couple of cowboys would be sent to hold them on water until after supper at five o'clock. After supper, we branded, as we rarely got the roundup all thrown together until two o'clock and usually finished up working it around four or a little later.

"Any stockman running 500 head and up had representatives commonly called Reps and the XIT and CK only carried a Rep herd on Redwater but the other outfits carried everything and would throw back to the home range every

O. C. CATO, Montana manager of the XIT finishing range in Montana, later bought out the holdings of the giant Texas outfit. Later a Montana State Senator and Sheriff of Custer County, Cato was known as one of the best cowmen of the West, and according to another XIT hand, Al Denby, "could very near tell the color of a cow by looking at her track."



few days. The 79, LU bar, Cross K, Hat X and Bow and Arrow, and Lazy J had Reps with XIT or CK wagons until we met the western wagons, then they cut out and went to those wagons and carried their cattle in those herds.

"It was quite a sight to see five outfits camped along the creek with the five remudas and herds scattered along for four-five miles on the creek. It was sometimes hard for a new man to find his own outfit. I recall one time when a fellow had just gone to work for one of the wagons. He went out and dayherded all afternoon for the wrong outfit. Of course, an old head was to blame for it and had a lot of fun over it.

"We had breakfast between three and four in the morning, dinner at two, and supper at 5. We had to stand two hours





A. L. (AL) DENBY, who went north with the first XIT cattle in the spring of 1890, is pictured here in 1910, the year before his marriage, and a year after he ended his employment with the ranch. Denby left a graphic description of his work with the XIT, especially concerning the tricky business of crossing the herds over the Yellowstone. This picture is loaned by his widow, Mrs. Vida Denby of Fallon, who has generously loaned other pictures used in this special cattle issue.

guard at night; about every third night when we had a big crew, and oftener if the crew got cut down for any reason. On the beef work in the fall, it was guard every night when we had a herd, which we always did, except when going back to gather another one. As it got later in the fall, we stood five guards: two men to the guard. First and last guards were three hours, sometimes last guard was longer as you stayed out there until you were relieved after breakfast.

"The XIT always made five shipments of two trains each, with each wagon every fall and once or twice we shipped three trains with Morris's wagon. The wagons shipped on alternate weeks, which made each wagon ship every two weeks and finished up around the 1st of November. Then they unshod the horses and laid off all the men but six counting the two wagon bosses. Rufe Morris kept his cook and L. D. McMakin and Bob Fudge kept his cook and the Hatchett ranch man: Al Denby.

"Rufe and his outfit stayed at the XIT ranch and Bob stayed at the Hatchett. The horses were all turned loose on Cedar Creek, near the XIT. Any man that was going to work for the outfit the following year could pick his string for a horse to ride through the winter. If they refused to let a man keep up a horse he might just as well

figure he was going to work for some other outfit next year.

"There was no winter work in the country at that time to amount to anything and the boys used to make the two ranches their headquarters and took in all the dances in the country during the winter. Girls were very scarce and any cowboy who managed to spear himself a steady girl was considered a little above the rest, or he usually felt that way anyhow. But the saying was, that no cowboy could summer a girl or winter a slicker, although in some instances it was done. It was very seldom that a school marm taught the second term without annexing some cowboy for a husband, and as a rule they had the entire bunch to pick from.

"I went to Montana in 1904 and went to work for the CK outfit at Glendive in June as they were working down the river on the general roundup; and worked that fall until the wagon pulled off the last of November. I worked for them through the general in 1905 and quit in August. Then went to work for Rufe Morris on Redwater when he was gathering his second beef herd and worked until the wagon pulled off the 1st of November. In 1906 we started to work at the mouth of Custer Creek on the 20th of May. Both XIT wagons were there, as the western roundups did not start until later than usual, and Bob Fudge had to start receiving cattle at Glendive around June 12th from the Southern XIT ranch.

"On account of so many western cattle being handled in our territory in 1905 the XIT and CK refused to handle them with Reps. So it was arranged at the Stock meeting in Miles City, when they laid out the roundups for

the year, that Hat X wagon come down, Chas. Bell wagon boss. We worked Custer Creek and made one roundup on Cherry Creek and it started raining. We never turned a wheel for eight days, tried to roundup a time or two but had to quit. We lost twelve days on account of rain between Custer Creek and Glendive and twenty two days altogether on general and never finished up until the middle of August.

"That was the rainiest year I ever saw in Montana, except 1915.

"We pulled off the wagon, I think, on the 2nd of Nov. and the outfit had a lot of railroad land leased around the XIT ranch but did not have furrows plowed around it, which was the law against sheep. When we got to the ranch, we found John Howe with three bands of sheep grazing right up to the door. So we got a surveyor out there

to find corners and Ed Weisner and I put four horses on a walking plow and followed those surveyors around over the hills and coulees for days, plowing furrows and setting up trespass notices until it snowed. Perhaps some people think we liked that job.

"The winter of 1906-1907 was a stem winder and it cost John Howe a lot of money to try to eat the XIT out, as he got caught in there and after we got the land all marked he did not have much range and could not get out. He lost 90 percent of his sheep. The snow started the last of November and never let up; by Christmas we could not get away from the ranch, except to go ten miles after the mail at McMillan post office once a week. It was a long day's work to go there and back. We used to bring the mail for Grue Bros. and Ledson Bros. who lived a few miles away from the ranch.



TWO OLD XIT HANDS, Charlie Clement, left, and J. K. Marsh are shown in this picture taken by E. J. Cameron, early day photographer of Fallon, Mont. Cowhand Clement, still living, owns the original of this picture. Both these men were known to Casey Barthelmess of Miles City, a member of the board of the Historical Society who traveled throughout Eastern Montana this Summer to visit his old friends and gather pictures used with this article. "When I was a kid of 13 and 14, I spent two summers and one winter (1903-04) on a ranch adjacent to and on the range of the XIT," Barthelmess writes. "Consequently, I got acquainted with a lot of these cowpunchers. Even spent some time at the roundup wagon where I had been taken to help with the throw-backs. To have gotten acquainted with these men of the range that long ago was truly a privilege."



XIT MEN IN ACTION are shown in the two pictures, owned by Charley Clement, veteran XIT hand who still lives near Hardin. Clement is shown in the picture above roping a steer near Terry, Mont., July 4, 1910. His time: 32 seconds. The XIT chuckwagon is shown on the move in the picture below, with Claude McCracken, the cook, driving. Both pictures were taken by E. J. Cameron of Fallon, Mont.

"Ed Weisner bought the ferry at Fallon that winter which left me as next oldest man and I was kept on the payroll that winter. Rufe Morris sent word to McMakin and I, in February to come to the Hatchett. We left the XIT before sun-up, riding big grained horses and got to the Undem ranch after dark, 15 miles, and left there next morning at daylight. We got to the Hatchett a little after noon and that was only ten miles.

"We saw as many as 16 head of cattle in one bunch dead. Thousands of cattle had drifted on to the Yellowstone and the snow was four feet deep on the level on the Yellowstone flat. We cut the Northern Pacific fence and let them drift into the bad lands on the south side of the river. Bob Fudge had to take his wagon over in the spring and gather them, the CK had a wagon over there the next fall. The XIT put in a lot of Texas yearlings in the spring of 1905 but they never shipped out very many of them; the snow was so deep, they could not get to [grass] and their

legs got so sore from climbing through the deep snow, that they would just quit and die.

"Rufe Morris was a very good beef man and always got his herds to the road in good shape. The Southern fellows were good hands but not such good beef hands the first year or two. They did not like day herding and were too keen with their ropes which did not 'go' around a beef herd; as one little run would knock \$1,000.00 off the herd.

"The sheep is what put the XIT out of business. . . . The settlers never started to come in here until 1909 and only a few then. Some school marms took up some claims on the flats south of Fallon in 1909 and came to the Hatchett dance that winter, and thought there were no cowboys there because they did not have their Chaps and Spurs on.

"Mr. O. C. Cato was General Manager there and a finer man never lived but was death on whiskey around the outfit when they were working. He



O. C. CATO, general manager of the XIT and the knowledgeable cattleman who eventually acquired ownership of the Montana holdings of the Texas outfit, is pictured in the center of this historic picture, owned by Mrs. A. T. Gifford of Fallon, Mont. Note the XIT brand on Cato's horse. At the right is Nick Buttleman, "rep" for the Diamond G holdings.



was willing for the boys to go to town when they had time and get drunk and get it off of their minds, but there was no drinking around the wagons and no poker playing either.

"Bob Fudge was a big man, he weighed around 250 in the winter and around 230 in the summer but was very light and easy on horses. He was a real cowman but had trouble running a wagon for when anything went wrong he could not help but say something to the man when they both were mad—and most cowboys were very touchy."

"It wasn't all work by any means. Many an XIT hand in Montana rode all day in order to dance a night away. Riding a horse twenty to sixty miles to enjoy a few hours of whirling was not uncommon, and well worth the effort. Sometimes a blizzard would catch the dancers, and what was supposed to be a sixteen-hour ball would turn into an affair lasting three or four days.

"But there was always plenty to eat," remembers Marsh, "as all the married women always brought plenty of cakes."

"The big dances of the winter were at the Hamelow Ranch on Tusler Creek, John Buttleman's on Bad Route, Cracker Box Pete's [Pete Evans] on Cracker Box, Kiney's on the Yellowstone," Marsh continues. "Ed and Louis Weisner were violinists and worked for the XIT. They played for all the dances and would go horse back with their fiddles tied on their backs. Most of the time we took up a dollar from each man to pay for the music and the rule

was, that the musicians got the collection whatever it might be. But toward the last the ranchers got so they insisted that they were giving the dance and intended to pay for it.

"[In] December 1907 . . . we had a big farewell dance . . . at the Hatchett ranch. The Yellowstone was late freezing that year and Ed Weisner kept the ferry in on purpose for the dance. The people from the south side came over early in the afternoon but it got pretty cold that night and the slush ice was running so thick the next morning that neither rowboat nor ferry could run. So we just kept on dancing as the slush did not run out until late in the afternoon so there was a possibility of getting across. All of the men went to the ferry and helped get the boat across with the people in it, and then we came back in row boats and had a hard time getting back."

Probably the most sought-after dancer around the Montana spread was



ROUNDUP COOK, John "Buck" Derricks, was an important man to the XIT, serving the cowboys breakfast between 3:00 and 4:00 in the morning, dinner at 2:00 in the afternoon, and supper at 5:00. This photo is from the collection of Mrs. Vida Denby, Fallon, Mont.



CATO FAMILY AND XIT HANDS are pictured at the XIT roundup wagon in this old picture owned by Mrs. Vida Denby of Fallon. The man in the center has been identified as the famed XIT manager, his right hand resting on the head of his daughter, Ethel, and left hand on the head of Mrs. Cato. In the back row, left to right, are an unidentified cowboy, then Myrtle Cato, who became Mrs. Percy Williamson. Fourth in line, back row, is an XIT cook named Williams. On the extreme right is John Ozella Cato who became the wife of the late Dr. W. J. Butler, State Veterinarian for many years. Seated at the extreme left is Leo Cato, next to his sister, Ethel.

Mrs. H. J. Kramer of Fallon, whose husband accompanied the trains of XIT cattle to Chicago every autumn. Mrs. Kramer loved to waltz. She taught many cowpunchers how to count "one-two-three." Besides, as one cowboy points out, "she was a large, strong lady who could steer them around."

The Texas boys liked to make the trek to Montana. It might be a long and arduous haul, but it represented change. Besides, there were always a few days on the town before starting back. "The town" was Miles City, which Gene Elliston remembers as a "typical western town; every one carried the law on his hip, gambling houses was thick all wide open, saloons the whiskey flowed in all direction. The redlites was doing a grate business."

"The first thing the cowboys done was to run the soldiers out of town which was easy as you know a soldier can't do much without orders so we cowboys celebrated in a grand way."

To an XIT hand, coming along largely after the open range had been put

under fence, Montana played the same role that Abilene, Wichita, and Dodge City had filled for an earlier generation of Texas cowboys. It might not be Heaven on earth, but it was somewhere to go, an interruption and an interlude in a life that lost its daily monotone only when looking backward and remembering.

As for the XIT in Texas, it didn't continue much longer after leaving Montana. From the start its owners intended to ranch for a profit, sell land as the country filled, and steadily reduce their cattle holdings. At the peak they were running 150,000 cattle a year in Texas in an area roughly 150 miles long and averaging 27 miles wide. But by 1912 they had sold off enough land that they decided to close down their cattle operation and become simply a land development syndicate. By that time, however, they had developed an historical legacy for Texas and for the cattle industry that still enriches the West a half-century later. A part-owner of that rawhide legacy is Montana.



—From A Painting by Ed Borein

## Up the Trail (And Back) in '82

Cowmen didn't write much. Thus western literature is blessed by this witty, low-key account of a noted Texas trail driver. Typical of this tough breed, Jack Potter writes off "several stampedes" as "no excitement whatever;" then dwells mostly on what, to him, was a greater adventure: the hair-raising 2,000-mile train trip home!

**F**EW COWMEN of the Southwest—or elsewhere—had more savvy, or were more beloved, than Colonel Jack Potter, son of Andrew Jackson Potter, famous "fighting parson" of the Texas frontier. And no man left a more pungent—however terse—portrait of himself in his own words (although copies of his writings are now hard to find). The witty, off-beat word picture reprinted here, appeared in his booklet, *CATTLE TRAILS OF THE OLD WEST*, published by the Old Trail Drivers Association of Texas in 1923.

Potter was born at Prairie Lee, Texas, on December 11, 1864. "Being the fifth son of a family of eight boys and six girls, I spent a very happy childhood," Potter wrote (in his other rare booklet, *LEAD STEER AND OTHER TALES*, 1939). "My only schooling was three four-months terms in a one room cabin, but my school of experience has been a wonderful teacher!"

Potter's old friend, J. Frank Dobie, one of the Southwest's great teachers, writers and historians, fortuitously wrote the classic preface for *LEAD STEER*. In it Dobie says: "If somebody could take a sound-recording machine and with about ten miles of film take down all of Jack Potter's tones and drawls and idiomatic phraseology native to the range; if this person could make a lifesize painting of him—preferably in the Dutch style—revealing the lust of life that smoulders under his skin and not omitting the chief fang that shows itself while he is chewing

tobacco; if next, this person set down in orderly and plain fashion all that his wonderful memory has stored away on cattle, rattlesnakes, ropes, range men, mirages, drouths, and a thousand other phenomena characteristic of the Southwest, together with the highly intelligent interpretations that he has given to his penetrating observations—then we should have a picture not only of Jack Potter but of the land to which, root and branch, he belongs; we should have the trail driver breed that he prefigures and the frontier Texas character that he embodies."

Jack Potter operated successfully as a pioneer cattleman in six states and territories, eventually settling in New Mexico near the Texas line. He was also foreman for the New England Cattle Company for ten years, and as such came to know as much about cattle, notably the Longhorn, as any man will ever know. Frank Dobie, who always called Potter "Old Yaqui," because the Mexican vaqueros knew him as "Meester Yaqui," also states in that famed foreword to *LEAD STEER*: "The longhorn made more history than any other breed of the taurine world, and I have a thousand times thought what a pity it is that some person of intelligence, experience, and power of observation of Jack Potter or Charles Goodnight should not have been able to assemble data in an orderly way and write a natural history book on the Texas Longhorn."

Later in life Potter served three terms in the New Mexico legislature, quickly becoming a favorite be-

J. FRANK DOBIE, writer, historian and teacher and Southwestern Regional Editor of this magazine, who has been of particular help in setting the stage for this gem of writing from the pen of his old friend, Trail Driver Jack Potter.

*cause of his salty wit and earthy common sense. In 1934, he and his wife celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. In 1950, death came to this singular man who was known more for his interest in cow nature than in gun fights, who had great humor and imagination as well as intelligence and industry.*

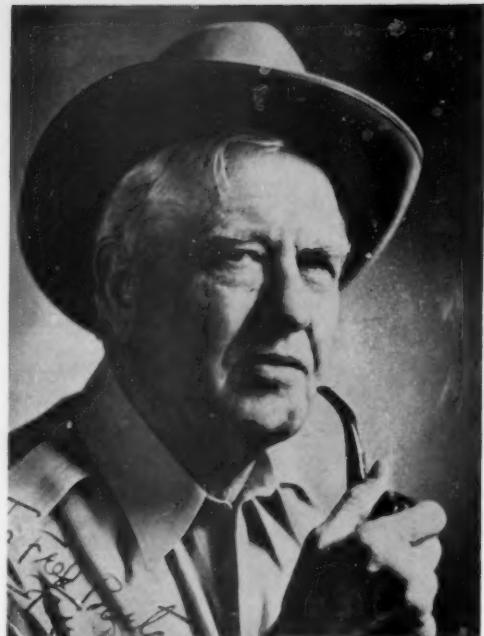
Frank Dobie adds: "Just to look at him made me realize that I had met a man—and such men are not common—summing up in himself the whole trail driver and range tradition."

For the pleasure of presenting Jack Potter to our readers, we are deeply grateful, not only to Mr. Dobie for sharing his knowledge of this wondrous cowman, but to The Old Trail Drivers Association of San Antonio, which first published these words of Jack Potter. George Saunders, founder of the Association, said this was "characteristic of the humor and wit of this roaring, hell-raising cow-puncher, considered to be the most cheerful liar on the face of the earth, but always the life of the outfit in camp or on the trail":

**I**N THE spring of 1882, the New England Livestock Co. bought three thousand shorthorns in Southwest Texas, cut them into four herds and started them on the trail to Colorado, with King Hennant of Corpus Christi in charge of the first herd, Asa Clark of Legarta the second herd, Billie Burke the third herd and John Smith of San Antonio in charge of the fourth. When they reached a point near San Antonio Smith asked me to go with the herd at \$30 a month and transportation back. Now, friends, it will not take long to tell my experiences going up the trail, but it will require several pages to recount what I had to endure coming back home.

There was no excitement whatever on this drive. It was to me very much like a summer's outing in the Rocky Mountains. We went out by way of Fredericksburg, Mason and Brady City, and entered the Western trail at Cow Gap, going through Albany near Fort Griffin, where we left the Western trail and selected a route through to Trinidad, Colorado, via Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos, Wichita and Pease Rivers to the Charles Goodnight ranch on the Staked Plains. We had several stampedes while crossing the plains.

En route we saw thousands of antelope crossing the trail in front of the herd. We crossed the Canadian at Tuscosa. This was a typical cowboy town, and at this time a general roundup was in progress and I believe there were a hundred and fifty cow-punchers in the place. They had taken a day off to celebrate, and as there were only seven saloons in Tuscosa they were all doing



a flourishing business. We had trouble in crossing the river with our herd, as those fellows were riding up and down the streets yelling and shooting.

Our next point was over the Dim Trail and freight road to Trinidad, Colorado, where we arrived the tenth of July. Here the manager met us and relieved two of the outfits, saying the country up to the South Platte was easy driving and that they would drift the horses along with two outfits instead of four. The manager and King Hennant made some medicine and called for the entire crews of John Smith and Asa Clark, and told Billie Burke to turn his crew over to Hennant who was to take charge of the whole drive. I was disappointed for I did not want to spoil the summer with a two months' drive. They called the men up one at a time and gave them their checks. However, King Hennant arranged with the manager for me to remain with them, and

then it was agreed to send me with some of the cow ponies to the company's cattle ranch in the Big Horn basin later on.

The drive up the South Platte was fine. We traveled for three hundred miles along the foothills of the Rockies, where we were never out of sight of the snowy ranges. We went out by way of La Junta, Colorado, on the Santa Fe and then to Deer Trail. We would throw our two herds together at night and the next morning cut them into two herds for the trail. We arrived at the South Platte River near Greeley Colorado, about the tenth of August.

The itch or ronnia had broken out on the trail and in those days people did not know how to treat it successfully. Our manager sent us a wagon load of kerosene and sulphur with which to fight the disease.

When we reached Crow Creek we turned the herds loose and began building what is known as the Crow Ranch. I worked here thirty days and it seemed like thirty years. One day the manager came out and gave instructions to shape up a herd of one hundred and fifty select cow ponies to be taken to the Big Horn Ranch, and I was chosen to go with the outfit. This was the first time I had seen an outfit fixed up in the north. I supposed we would get a pack horse and fit up a little outfit and two of us hike out with them. It required two days to get started. The outfit consisted of a wagon loaded with chuck, a big wall tent, cots to sleep on, a stove and a number one cook. We hit the trail, and it was another outing for me, for this time we were traveling in new fields.

After leaving Cheyenne we pulled out for Powder River and then up to Sheridan. The weather was getting cold and I began to get homesick. When we reached the Indian country I was told that it was only one day's drive to Custer's battleground. I was agreeably surprised the next morning as we came down a slope into the Little Big Horn Valley to the battleground. I was un-

der the impression that Sitting Bull had hemmed Custer up in a box canyon and came up from behind and massacred his entire army. But that was a mistake, as Sitting Bull with his warriors was camped in the beautiful valley when Custer attacked him in the open. It seems that the Indians retreated slowly up a gradual slope to the east and Custer's men followed. The main fight took place at the top of the rise, as there is a headstone where every soldier fell, and a monument where Custer was killed.

The balance of that day we passed thousands of Indians who were going in the same direction we were traveling. When they go to the agency to get their monthly allowance they take along everything with them, each family driving their horses in a separate bunch. When we arrived at the Crow agency the boss received a letter from the manager instructing him to send me back to Texas as the company were contracting for cattle for spring delivery, and I would be needed in the trail drives. The next morning I roped my favorite horse, and said to the boys: "Goodbye, fellows, I am drifting south where the climate suits my clothes." That day I overtook an outfit on the way to Ogallala, and traveled with them several days, and then cut out from them and hiked across the prairie one hundred and fifty miles to the Crow ranch, where I sold my two horses, and hired a party to take me and my saddle to Greeley, where I expected to set out for home.

Now, reader, here I was, a boy not yet seventeen years old, two thousand miles from home. I had never been on a railroad train, had never slept in a hotel, never taken a bath in a bath house, and from babyhood I had heard terrible stories about ticket thieves, money-changers, pickpockets, three-card monte, and other robbing schemes, and I had horrors about this, my first railroad trip. The first thing I did was to make my money safe by tying it up in my shirt tail. I had a draft for \$150



Col Jack Patten  
June 15, 1938  
Canyon, Texas  
—Bless Friend

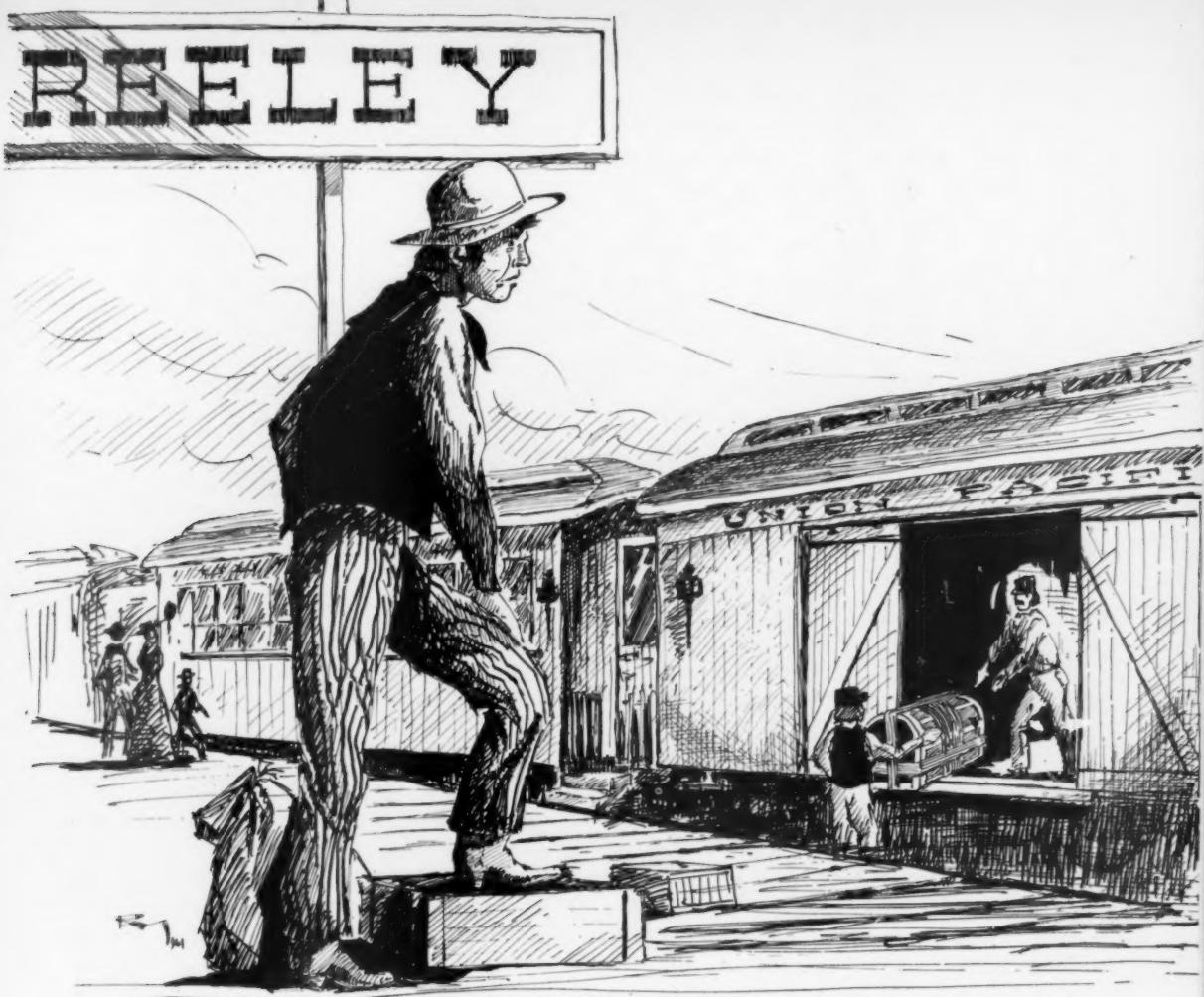
This hat, according to Col. Patten was formerly the "San Antonio," now called "San All" - made by Stetson - became popular about 1908. In Trail Driving days, the "Boss of the Range" was popular - 4" crown, 4" brim, oyster color, Stetson. (Information from Patten)

and some currency. I purchased a second-hand trunk and about two hundred feet of rope with which to tie it. The contents of the trunk were one apple-horn saddle, a pair of chaps, a Colt's 45, one sugar, a hen-skin blanket, and a change of dirty clothes. You will see later that this trunk and its contents caused me no end of trouble.

My cowboy friends kindly assisted me in getting ready for the journey. The company had agreed to provide me with transportation, and they purchased a local ticket to Denver for me and gave me a letter to deliver to the general ticket agent at this point, instructing him to sell me a reduced ticket to Dodge City, Kansas, and enable me to secure a cowboy ticket from there to San Antonio for twenty-five dollars. Dodge City was the largest delivering point in the northwest, and by the combined efforts of several prominent stockmen a cheap rate to San Antonio had been perfected for the convenience of the hundreds of cowboys returning home after the drives.

About four p. m. the Union Pacific train came pulling into Greeley. Then it was a hasty handshake with the boys,

one of them handed me my trunk check, saying, "Your baggage is loaded. Good-bye, write me when you get home," and the train pulled out. It took several minutes for me to collect myself and then the conductor came through and called for the tickets. When I handed him my ticket he punched a hole in it, and then pulled out a red slip, punched it too and slipped it into my hat band. I jumped to my feet and said, "You can't pull that on me. Give me back my ticket," but he passed out of hearing, and as I had not yet learned how to walk on a moving train I could not follow him. When I had become fairly settled in my seat again the train crossed a bridge, and as it went by I thought the thing was going to hit me on the head. I dodged those bridges all the way up to Denver. When I reached there I got off at the Union Station and walked down to the baggage car, and saw them unloading my trunk. I stepped up and said; "I will take my trunk." A man said, "No; we are handling this baggage." "But," said I, "that is my trunk, and has my saddle and gun in it." They paid no attention to me and wheeled the trunk off to the



JACK POTTER prepares to board the Union Pacific at Greeley, Colo., his firmly roped trunk reluctantly placed in the hands of the train crew in this drawing by Robert M. Morgan, curator of the Historical Society of Montana. The drawing, opposite page, of Jack Potter, and his hat was prepared in 1958 by Ben Carlton Mead of Irving, Texas, and presented to J. Frank Dobie of Austin. The drawings on pages 62 and 64 are also from the pen of Mr. Morgan and were created especially for this article.

baggage room, but I followed right along, determined that they were not going to put anything over me. Seeing that I was so insistent one of the men asked me for my check. It was wrapped up in my shirt tail, and I went after it, and produced the draft I had been given as wages. He looked at it and said, "This is not your trunk check. Where is your metal check with numbers on it?" Then it began to dawn on me what the darn thing was, and when I produced it and handed it to him, he asked me where I was going. I told him to San Antonio, Texas, if I could get

there. I then showed him my letter to the general ticket agent, and he said: "Now, boy, you leave this trunk right here and we will recheck it and you need not bother about it." That sounded bully to me.

I followed the crowd down Sixteenth and Curtiss Streets and rambled around looking for a quiet place to stop. I found the St. Charles Hotel and made arrangements to stay all night. Then I went off to a barber shop to get my hair cut and clean up a bit. When the barber finished with me he asked if I wanted a bath, and when I said yes,



a negro porter took me down the hallway and into a side room. He turned on the water, tossed me a couple of towels and disappeared. I commenced undressing hurriedly, fearing the tub would fill up before I could get ready. The water was within a few inches of the top of the tub when I plunged in. Then I gave a yell like a Comanche Indian, for the water was boiling hot! I came out of the tub on all fours, but when I landed on the marble floor it was so slick that I slipped and fell backwards with my head down. I scrambled around promiscuously, and finally got my footing with a chair for a brace. I thought: "Jack Potter, you are scalded after the fashion of a hog." I caught a lock of my hair to see if it would "slip," at the same time fanning myself with my big Stetson hat. I next examined my toe nails, for they had received a little more dipping than my hair, but I found them in fairly good shape, turning a bit dark, but still hanging on.

That night I went to the Tabor Opera House and saw a fine play. There I found a cowboy chum, and we took in the sights until midnight when I returned to the St. Charles. The porter showed me up to my room and turned on the gas. When he had gone I undressed to go to bed, and stepped up to blow out the light. I blew and blew until I was out of breath, and then tried to fan the flame out with my hat, but I had to go to bed and leave the gas burning. It was fortunate that I did not succeed, for at that time the papers were full of accounts of people gassed just that way.

The next morning I started out to find the Santa Fe ticket office, where I presented my letter to the head man there. He was a nice appearing gentleman, and when he had looked over the letter, he said, "So you are a genuine cowboy? Where is your gun and how many notches have you on its handle? I suppose you carry plenty of salt with you on the trail for emergency? I was just reading in a magazine a few days

ago about a large herd which stampeded and one of the punchers mounted a swift horse and ran up in front of the leaders and began throwing out salt, and stopped the herd just in time to keep them from running off a high precipice." I laughed heartily when he told me this and said, "My friend, you can't learn the cow business out of books. That yarn was hatched in the brain of some fiction writer who probably never saw a cow in his life. But I am pleased to find a railroad man who will talk, for I always heard that a railroad man only used two words, Yes and No." Then we had quite a pleasant conversation. He asked me if I was ever in Albert's Buckhorn saloon in San Antonio and saw the collection of fine horns there. Then he gave me an emigrant cowboy ticket to Dodge City and a letter to the agent at that place stating that I was eligible for a cowboy ticket to San Antonio.

As it was near train time I hunted up the baggage crew and told them I was ready to make another start. I showed them my ticket and asked them about my trunk. They examined it, put on a new check, and gave me one with several numbers on it. I wanted to take the trunk out and put it on the train, but they told me to rest easy and they would put it on. I stood right there until I saw them put it on the train, then I climbed aboard.

This being my second day out I thought my troubles should be over, but not so, for I couldn't face those bridges. They kept me dodging and fighting my head. An old gentleman who sat near me said, "Young man, I see by your dress that you are a typical cowboy, and no doubt you can master the worst bronco or rope and tie a steer in less than a minute, but in riding on a railway train you seem to be a novice. Sit down on this seat with your back to the front and those bridges will not bother you." And sure enough it was just as he said.

We arrived at Coolidge, Kansas, one of the old landmarks of the Santa Fe

trail days, about dark. That night at 12 o'clock we reached Dodge City, where I had to lay over for twenty-four hours. I thought everything would be quiet in the town at that hour of the night, but I soon found out that they never slept in Dodge. They had a big dance hall there which was to Dodge City what Jack Harris' Theatre was to San Antonio. I arrived at the hall in time to see a gambler and a cowboy mix up in a sixshooter duel. Lots of smoke, a stampede, but no one killed. I secured a room and retired. When morning came I arose and fared forth to see Dodge City by daylight. It seemed to me that the town was full of cowboys and cattle owners. The first acquaintance I met here was George W. Saunders, now the president and chief remudero of the Old Trail Drivers. I also found Jess Pressnall and Slim Johnson there, as well as several others whom I knew down in Texas. Pressnall said to me: "Jack, you will have lots of company on your way home. Old 'Dog Face' Smith is up here from Cotulla and he and his whole bunch are going back tonight. Old 'Dog Face' is one of the best trail men that ever drove a cow, but he is all worked up about having to go back on a train. I wish you would help them along down the line in changing cars." That afternoon I saw a couple of chuck wagons coming loaded with punchers, who had on the same clothing they wore on the trail, their pants stuck in their boots, and their spurs on. They were bound for San Antonio. Old "Dog Face" Smith was a typical Texan, about thirty years of age, with long hair and three months' growth of whiskers. He wore a blue shirt and a red cotton handkerchief around his neck. He had a bright intelligent face that bore the appearance of a good trail hound, which no doubt was the cause of people calling him "Dog Face."

It seemed a long time that night to wait for the train and we put in the time visiting every saloon in the town. There was a big stud poker game going



on in one place, and I saw one Texas fellow, whose name I will not mention, lose a herd of cattle at the game. But he might have won the herd back before daylight.

I will never forget seeing that train come into Dodge City that night. Old "Dog Face" and his bunch were pretty badly frightened and we had considerable difficulty in getting them aboard. It was about 12:30 when the train pulled out. The conductor came around and I gave him my cowboy ticket. It was almost as long as your arm, and as he tore off a chunk of it I said: "What authority have you to tear up a man's ticket?" He laughed and said, "You are on my division. I simply tore off one coupon and each conductor between here and San Antonio will tear off one for each division." That sounded all right, but I wondered if that ticket would hold out all the way down.

Every one seemed to be tired and worn out and the bunch began bedding down. Old "Dog Face" was out of humor, and was the last one to bed down. At about three o'clock our train was sidetracked to let the west-bound train pass. This little stop caused the boys to sleep the sounder. Just then the west bound train sped by traveling at the rate of about forty miles an hour, and just as it passed our coach the engineer blew the whistle. Talk about

your stampedes! That bunch of sleeping cowboys arose as one man, and started on the run with Old "Dog Face" Smith in the lead. I was a little slow in getting off but fell in with the drags. I had not yet woke up, but thinking I was in a genuine cattle stampede, yelled out, "Circle your leaders and keep up the drags." Just then the leaders circled and ran into the drags, knocking some of us down. They circled again and the news butcher crawled out from under foot and jumped through the window like a frog. Before they could circle back the next time, the train crew pushed in the door and caught Old "Dog Face," and soon the bunch quieted down. The conductor was pretty angry and threatened to have us transferred to the freight department and loaded into a stock car.

We had breakfast at Hutchinson, and after eating and were again on our way, speeding through the beautiful farms and thriving towns of Kansas, we organized a kangaroo court and tried the engineer of that west bound train for disturbing the peace of passengers on the east bound train. We heard testimony all morning, and called in some of the train crew to testify. One of the brakemen said it was an old trick for that engineer to blow the whistle at that particular siding and that he was undoubtedly the cause of a great many

stampedes. The jury brought in a verdict of guilty, and assessed the death penalty. It was ordered that he be captured, taken to some place on the western trail, there to be hog-tied like a steer and then have the road brand applied with a good hot iron and a herd of not less than five thousand long-horn Texas steers made to stampede and trample him to death.

We had several hours lay-over at Emporia, Kansas, where we took the M. K. & T. for Parsons, getting on the main line through Indian Territory to Denison, Texas. There was a large crowd of punchers on the through train who were returning from Ogallala by way of Kansas City and Omaha.

As we were traveling through the Territory Old "Dog Face" said to me: "Potter, I expect it was me that started that stampede up there in Kansas, but I just couldn't help it. You see I took on a scare once and since that time I have been on the hair trigger when suddenly awakened. In the year 1875 me and Wild Horse Jerry were camped at a water hole out west of the Neuces River, where we were snaring mustangs. One evening a couple of peloncias pitched camp near by, and the next morning our remuda was missing, all except our night horses. I told Wild Horse Jerry to hold down the camp and watch the snares, and I hit the trail of those peloncias which headed for the Rio Grande. I followed it for about forty miles and then lost all signs. It was nightfall, so I made camp, prepared supper and rolled up in my blanket and went to sleep. I don't know how long I slept, but I was awakened by a low voice saying: 'Dejarle desconsar bien por que en un rato el va a comenzar su viaje por el otro mundo.' (Let him rest well, as he will soon start on his journey to the other world.) It was the two Mexican horse thieves huddled around my camp fire smoking their cigarettes and taking it easy, as they thought they had the drop on me. As I came out of bed two bullets whizzed near my head, but about that time

my old Colt's forty-five began talking, and the janitor down in Hades had two more peloncias on his hands. Ever since that night, if I am awakened suddenly I generally come out on my all fours roaring like a buffalo bull. I never sleep on a bedstead for it would not be safe for me as I might break my darn neck, so I always spread down on the floor."

It was a long ride through the Territory, and we spent the balance of the day singing songs and making merry.

We then boarded the I. & G. N. [and] . . . pretty soon the porter called out "San Antonio, Santonnie-o," and that was music to my ears. My first move on getting off the train was to look out for my trunk and found it had arrived. I said to myself, "Jack Potter, you're a lucky dog. Ticket held out all right, toe nails all healed up, and trunk came through in good shape." After registering at the Central Hotel, I wrote to that general ticket agent at Denver:

San Antonio, Texas, Oct. 5, 1882  
Gen. Ticket Agt. A. T. & S. F.  
1415 Larimer St.  
Denver, Colorado

Dear Sir—I landed in San Antonio this afternoon all O. K. My trunk also came through without a scratch. I want to thank you very much for the man you sent along to look after my trunk. He was very accommodating, and would not allow me to assist him in loading it on at Denver. No doubt he will want to see some of the sights of San Antonio, for it is a great place, and noted for its chile con carne. When he takes a fill of this food, as every visitor does, you can expect him back in Denver on very short notice, as he will be seeking a cooler climate. Did you ever eat any chile con carne? I will send you a dozen cans soon, but tell your wife to keep it in the refrigerator as it might set the house on fire. Thank you again for past favors.

Your Bulliest Friend  
**JACK POTTER**



## PRELUDE TO THE LAST ROUNDUP

**J**OHN T. MURPHY, a highly successful pioneer, businessman and banker, was quick to see the bonanza proportions of the Montana livestock industry. As president of the Montana Cattle Company, he established the "79" brand in 1879—taking the name from the date. Until it began crumbling in 1912, the great 79 ranged many thousands of cattle, horses and sheep with the numbers "7" and "9" seared in rotation on their left sides. The later home range was the vast area between the turbid Yellowstone, north to the mouth of the Musselshell. But many a dogie was trailed 150 miles further northeast to the fabled grasses of the Big Dry, near the town of Jordan in eastern Montana.

Murphy, born in Platte County, Missouri, on Feb. 26, 1842, was typical of the men of means who entered this fascinating phase of Montana's history. After a few years of clerking and general merchandising in Colorado, he came to Virginia City, M. T., in 1864 with a wagon train of goods, carefully selected to meet the demands of that teeming mining camp. Murphy was so successful that the following spring he loaded a train of merchandise in Denver and shipped it by steamer up the Missouri to Fort Benton. This time he brought all his merchandise to Helena and thus began an eminently successful business career.

His wholesale and retail grocery business and freighting, long known as Murphy Neel and Co., eventually branched to Fort Benton and Deer Lodge. Murphy-Maclay Hardware Co. of Great Falls bears his name to this day. In 1890 he sold his Helena store and helped organize the Helena National Bank, eventually becoming president of the Montana National Bank.

Like so many business stalwarts of his day, Murphy's interests ranged widely. They included mining, and at one time he was associated with Sam Hauser, Peter Larson and A. M. Holter in the Coeur d'Alene district of Idaho. But it was the livestock business which brought him into the highest financial circles and contributed most to the establishment of his large personal fortune.

The 79 and other brands of the Montana Cattle Company were started early enough to take full advantage of the open range era. By astute management and foresight they survived longer than most, after the free range was largely fenced by farmers and preempted by railroads. In 1881 the 79 moved its headquarters to Big Coulee Creek, south of Ryegate in Central Montana. Other ranches used as distribution points and 79 wintering headquarters included the White Beaver, between Reedpoint and Columbus on the Yellowstone; Painted Robe, on the creek of that name west of Broadview; the River Ranch, just west of Ryegate on the Musselshell; and the Cross S, considered 79 cowboy headquarters.

Horses were grown on a huge scale by the Montana Cattle Company. A single consignment of 3,000 head was once sent to an Omaha firm with enough still left over to form several roundup strings; while a thousand mares remained to replace the shipment. All-

though sheep raised by the company once numbered about 70,000, this was never a major phase of its operations.

Feeding the large numbers of cowboys working for the outfit required prodigious amounts of food. The Columbus Mercantile Company once provided a straight carload of dried fruits—apples, peaches, and prunes—in one shipment; and salt was purchased by the carload lot. Hams and bacon bought in 50-case lots were common.

Headquarters at the head of Big Dry Creek, known as the Dugout Ranch, became more and more important as open range and water began declining on the Musselshell range. The fact of the decline was apparent as early as 1883, as evidenced by a notice which appeared in the Sept. 20, 1883, issue of the ROCKY MOUNTAIN HUSBANDMAN. Signed by the Montana Cattle Co., North Western Cattle Co., and eighteen individuals and smaller outfits, the notice defined the Musselshell range and then warned: "We consider said range already overstocked, therefore we positively decline allowing any outside parties, or any parties locating herds upon this range, the use of our corrals, nor will they be permitted to join us in any roundup on said range, from and after this date."

Shipments of six or seven complete trainloads of steers and fat cows for the Chicago market were considered routine for many years to come. When the 79 said its final farewell at Columbus, Mont., on April 10, 1915, the BILLINGS GAZETTE noted that only 50 head of horses and 15 head of cattle were loaded on stock cars bound for Miles City, where a few sections of open range still existed. A half dozen old camp wagons and a few utensils were sent with the livestock to Miles City. A few thousand sheep went to Idaho. It was a sad day in Stillwater County.

The 79 did not face the inevitable break-up as early as most big outfits, because it early began purchasing railroad land and fencing it, along with Government land on alternate sections. They lived up to the letter of the law by running fences up to, but not quite around, corners of the Government land. When this practice was ended by Federal action in 1908, it was the beginning of the end for the 79.

In May, 1914, the end came for John T. Murphy. Returning from his winter home at Fort Myers, Florida, the 72-year-old businessman contracted typhoid-pneumonia and died at his home at 418 North Benton in Helena. His Montana career had spanned 50 years of uninterrupted success, not the least of which was engendered by the proud Montana Cattle Company and the famed 79. Books could be written on the subject were sufficient source material available. But the range men wrote their history in rawhide, blood and sweat. It seared the hides of cattle and was deeply imbedded in the hearts and minds of men—but little of it was recorded on paper. This, then, is only a minute scrap of the limited evidence surviving one of the great western cattle outfits. . .

MONTANA the magazine of western history



79 CATTLE are being driven to winter range on the Musselshell near Harlowton in the picture on the opposite page, taken in 1909 by Sid Armitage. The all-important chuck wagon and cook tent of the 79 is shown above. Cook Al Mantle is holding a pan of grub, and at left is a horse wrangler remembered as "Little Ben." The man at the right is Ben (Nose) Cowen.

## THE DYING DAYS OF THE GREAT 79

Montana boasted many cattle kings and scores of fabulous outfits—but one of the greatest was John T. Murphy's Montana Cattle Co. It survived longer than most, but the end of the trail was in sight by 1909.

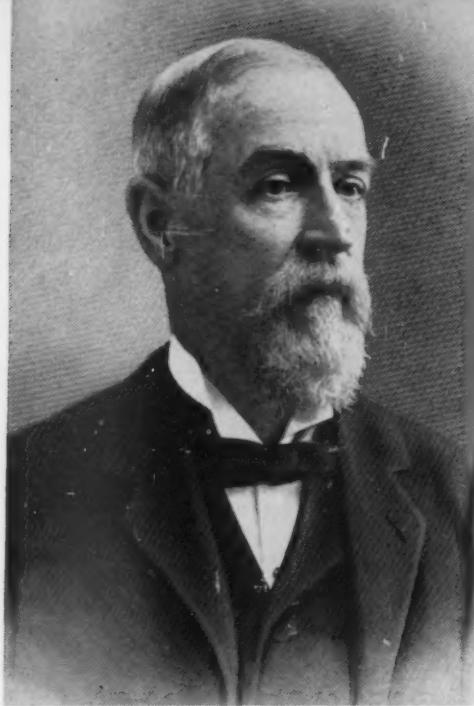
by George T. Armitage

IT IS MORE than 50 years now since the northern cattleman's free grass country slowly gave way to barbed wire and plow. It was a losing struggle for the land being waged between the cowman in chaps and the farmer in bib overalls that I witnessed in the summer of 1909. It was my good fortune to ride for the 79 brand of John T. Murphy's Montana Cattle Company, then engaged in what proved to be a last-ditch, futile fight to hold some of the last open range in Montana.

I admit straightaway that I was no top hand, but having been born and raised in cow country, I knew which side of a horse you mounted. But my brother, Sid, who got me on with the 79, had earned his spurs well. He had already acquired a good cowboy reputation as a bronc-fighter, and I was terribly proud of him. Watt McCool, the rugged wagon-boss who hired me, must have felt that a brother of Sid's was at least worth trying out.

When Sid wrote, just after I graduated from Billings High School, that my job was in the bag, I was both elated and scared. I had a good saddle (a W. B. TenEyck), a bridle, high-heeled boots and spurs, but I treated myself to some angora chaps of brilliant golden hue and a .32 Colt automatic pistol, which I kept out of sight in the pocket of my chaps. One thing all cowboys needed was a bedroll, but Sid said I could bunk with him, so I was all set for high adventure.

John Wood, a 79 headquarters man, met me at Cushman, a tiny railway station a few miles east of Ryegate. On the first of June, 1909, we started out with my gear, on a buckboard, to find the 79 wagon and roundup outfit I would join. We drove most of that afternoon across the vast prairie, the horizon fading to infinity in all directions with practically no sign of civilization and certainly none of the 79. My pilot didn't seem to be worrying so I kept my mouth shut; but as sundown drifted



JOHN T. MURPHY, who rose to Montana's highest financial circles, controlled the Montana Cattle Company, but remained a shadowy figure to men of the '79 and other brands run by the company during its cattle-raising heyday.

We followed all the rules at Moore's cabin and after a comfortable night we went roundup hunting again. Later that day Johnny Wood found the whole '79 spread, trail herd and all. Sid introduced me around, with the inference that that was as far as brotherly love would go. His fellow cowboys gave me a friendly "Howdy" but with a reserved let's-see-how-he-works-out attitude. I was happy to be one of them. Watt McCool, that tough Irishman, was never too tired to take on an extra job besides his duties as wagon boss. He was also a real cowhand with unlimited savvy and endurance. With men like him around to help, it wasn't long before I understood enough to keep from stumbling over my feet.

Generally a trail herd crew similar to ours was composed of at least 12 riders, headed by a wagon boss who managed the chuck-wagon; a cook who drove it with a two- or four-horse team; and a "nighthawk" who in daytime drove the bed wagon full to overflowing with necessities, principally the cowboys' war bags and bedrolls. When our wagons had been moved to a new campsite, the nighthawk, who had been out all night with the remuda, turned

into twilight I was getting awfully tired and achingly hungry.

Suddenly we spied a solid, if lonesome-looking log cabin, plus a tiny lean-to barn. Nobody was home; but right there I learned a lesson in openhearted and practical range hospitality. Woods told me these "diggins" belonged to a well known old-timer named Jim Moore, a "bach" who had apparently got fed up with his own company and had maybe gone to town on business or to have a little fun. But instead of locking his cabin or caching his food and valuables, he had typically left the key in the door.

Travelers like us thought nothing of entering such a cabin, cooking a hearty meal with victuals and utensils we found, and spending a night in the bunks or using "soogans" (bedrolls) that were available on the floor. When you departed it was a Montana "must" to leave everything as you found it: woodbox full and fire out, dishes washed, floor swept and bunks tidied. No payment was left or expected. The absent host from whom you had "accepted" hospitality might well be enjoying similar shelter in someone else's home, that very night.

George T. Armitage was actually born in a log cabin ranch house near Billings. His father, Thomas, came west on the staff of Colonel J. B. Clough during the late 1870 westward extension of the Northern Pacific—the rails and the elder Armitage reaching the temporary Western terminus, that Queen of the Cowtowns, Miles City, about the same time. Thomas Armitage eventually became agent for the N. P. at Marysville, then the booming gold mining metropolis near Helena. The author's older brother, Sidney, an experienced cowhand with the '79, was born at Marysville and now lives in Lander, Wyo. The family moved to the ranch near Billings, and it was here that the rest of the children, including George, Kenneth, Harriet and Florence, were born. George graduated from Montana State University in 1914, with one of the first degrees in journalism. He and his wife, Louise, spent 22 years in Hawaii, where he was executive secretary of the Hawaii Visitors' Bureau. They now live in retirement in Calistoga, Calif.

ARMITAGE BROTHERS, George (left) and Sid (right) are pictured at the 79 River Ranch located on the Musselshell River just west of Ryegate. This was in the summer of 1909 when young George, fresh from Billings High School, hired out as a 79 cowhand under the tutelage of his more experienced brother.

the wagon over to Ben, our day wrangler. Counting the wagon boss, cook, nighthawk, day wrangler and the rest of the crew of not less than eight regular cowboys, Watt McCool had a minimum of at least 12 men to oversee. This number was frequently increased by "reps" (representatives) from other ranches which were too small to run their own wagons and paid a nominal fee for the privilege of joining ours. Some of the larger roundups exchanged reps with the 79.

After I was partially acquainted with the outfit, I learned how well organized it really was. Each hand knew his job and every activity dovetailed smoothly. When the outfit was "holding" or "trailing," there was always someone on "herd guard" 24 hours a day. And each of eight or more cowboys stood a specific two-man, two-hour night watch with the herd from 8 P. M. to 4 A. M. I drew the second shift, from 10 P. M. until midnight. Each herd guard was made up of two riders quietly encircling the herd in opposite directions. And at least one guard was required to stay with the herd while the other guard returned to camp to call the next relief. That meant that if the partner who went in to call the relief got lost, or if the relief he called got lost, the lone guard had to stick with the herd until someone came. This waiting was sometimes all night, for even old hands could miss the herd or camp on a dark and stormy night.

One night I couldn't find either herd or wagons, and stayed lost all night. I remembered finally that in such a situation, if you gave your horse a loose rein, he was supposed to take you to camp. He took me, all right, not to camp, but to his friends in the remuda. There I located the nighthawk whose directions I tried to follow. But by that



time I was so sleepy and confused that I didn't find camp until daylight and finished a dismal night curled up in my slicker on the cold ground, bridle reins wrapped around my wrist. It was a lonesome stretch.

Every day I learned something new. For instance, cowboys did sing softly to lull a nervous herd. They were extremely careful not to do anything startling, like suddenly strike a match or even swish a slicker. A spring or fall stampede might be turned with little damage done, but a beef herd on trail to a railway shipping yard could run off a lot of the year's profit in one wild dash.

During my summer with the 79, I saw a few incipient stampedes which were nipped in the bud by gradually turning the leaders into a merry-go-



LEE HURT, nighthawk for the 79, was one of the top hands of the outfit. In recent years he has lived in Southern California.



RIVER RANCH of the 79 brand, located on the Musselshell River about 2½ miles west of Ryegate, as it looked in 1909.

round run until the whole herd was applying the brakes by milling into itself. The roar of those thundering hooves was more or less routine to the older cowboys, but to me it spelled high adventure.

Each 79 cowboy had a string of saddle horses, as many as a dozen, which he rode in rotation, changing three or four times a day. The cowboy, of course, broke up the rotation when he needed a prime horse for a special purpose, such as branding or fording. The latter, known as a river horse, took to floods and sudden cloudbursts with calm. I had in my own string a short-coupled, solidly-built fellow who knew just where to enter a flash flood in a usually dry gulch and how to swim down in the torrent to a cut-in out-trail on the other side. It took a strong horse with placid disposition to keep me from panicking under such circumstances. It was a fascinating sight to see a whole herd fording a stream with their snouts peeking periscope-like above the water.

The 79 ran different kinds of roundups, including the important spring "circle" to gather and brand calves; the beef roundups in late summer to cut out the fat steers for shipping to eastern stockyards; and finally the fall roundup when critters that might not weather a hard winter in the open were cut out and driven to a more sheltered range like the Big Coulee home ranch on Big Coulee Creek just south of Ryegate, or

the River Ranch on the Musselshell a few miles west of Ryegate. There the weaker animals were fed in corrals or fenced pastures which kept them from drifting before a blizzard. Despite the bitter cold of a Montana winter, jobs like that didn't go begging, for they offered cowboys snug cabins and year-around employment.

This particular 79 outfit was rounding up and moving a trail herd for fattening on the wide open range of the Big Dry country near Jordan. And on this drive I only vaguely understood the complexities of daily changing of camp—sometimes twice a day—and at the same time keeping the herd and remuda out of the way and headed right for water and grazing. As I recall, this herd of some 1,800 steers took about 17 days to go from the Big Coulee Creek country of Central Montana to the Big Dry range some 150 miles to the northeast.

On trail, the first one up was Al Mantle, our cook, who had been busy from about 3:30 A. M. over a portable sheet-iron stove in his cook tent and under the canvas fly that connected it with the ingenious rear cupboards of the chuck wagon. When Al yelled "Come and gether or I'll throw it in the mud," the crew that had been busy rolling their beds, made a wild, loud dash for the hot chow. This consisted of such rib-sticking fare as potatoes fried with sizzling steaks, mounds of big hot bis-

TWO 79 COWHANDS, "Cheyenne Bill" Felling and De los McBride, are pictured on roundup south of the home Big Coulee ranch. Cheyenne Bill, who later lived near Jordan, died in the influenza epidemic of 1918. McBride, who was a boyhood friend of the Armitage brothers, died in Billings three or four years ago.

cuits, and scalding java. On a chilly morning in the open, no food ever tasted better.

Two cowhands on the last 2:00 to 4:00 A. M. guard were still with the herd when Lee Hurt, the nighthawk, came thundering in at dawn with the remuda. The riding string dutifully darted into a temporary corral, quickly formed with a single rope secured to the bedwagon and stretching in a circle (belly-high to a horse) to iron pins driven into the ground. As soon as all mounts were milling and snorting in the corral, the cowboys turned loose their night horses, then roped one of their regular mounts for the strenuous day ahead.

I soon learned that in lassoing a horse in a rope corral you didn't unduly excite him by swinging your rope (a sure sign of a tenderfoot). Rather you caught him with a single quick cast, so that when you got the knack of it, your loop would drop neatly over the horse's head. Even a spooky horse knew that when that noose was around his neck, the jig was up for that day at least. I wasn't too good at roping, and sometimes had two or three in my noose. A specialty was called a "hoolihan" which I never mastered.

When the morning shift of four or more cowboys had downed breakfast and were in their saddles, it was already daylight. Then two or more rode out to relieve the last guard and put the herd in motion. Our most experienced riders would then take the "point" to head the critters in the right direction. Other riders on the "flanks" and in the "drags" would keep them moving. The drag, I soon discovered, was the least desirable and most prosaic position because the cowboys there had to crowd the herd forward and at the same time



eat ample dust. Less-experienced cowboys, like me, were so placed. Often the top hand riding point would lop back and yell, "Don't follow! Push 'em!"

With the herd up and moving, the remaining hands helped break camp and move it on to the next stop. The horse wrangler for the day took over the remuda after eight harness horses had been roped and hitched to the chuckwagon and bed wagon. When everything was loaded and secured, "Cookie," scrambled up to his spring-seat chuckwagon throne, gathered the fistful of reins and bellowed: "Turn 'em loose!"

Feeling frisky, his four-in-hand would hit their collars with a pop like a cracking bull-whip. The nighthawk's four raced close behind. These wagons skirted the trail herd. By making faster time than that set by the trail pilot, they arrived at the next campsite well ahead of the cattle herd and the remuda. If weather was threatening, cowboys helped pitch the bed and chuck wagon tents at the new campsite. If the weather was good, the hands might grab a little welcome shut-eye.

About 11 A. M. the cowhands at camp bolted an early dinner (they never called it lunch), mounted the next horse on their string, and rode out to relieve the punchers with the herd. In turn, this released crew raced for the new camp, led by a pilot. They gobbled a whopper of a meal and took a very brief breather. About 4:00 P. M., on fresh horses, this relief then took an early stint called "cocktail," during



ACTION ON THE 79's Big Coulee Ranch corrals is shown in these two pictures, taken about 1909. At left, cowboys are "four-footing" a bronc, preparatory to breaking. At extreme left is John Wood, headquarters man for the 79 who met young George Armitage at Cushman when he began his summer's work. Wood also wore the badge (concealed under his coat) of a stock detective during his years with the 79, as did W. E. Sutter, who owns this photo. Holding the tied horse (center) is "Cheyenne Bill" Felling, and kneeling by the horse closest to the ground is Charles Bateman, who later became sheriff of Garfield county. The man just behind him is Watt McCool, 79 wagon boss. In the photo at right, Cheyenne Bill Felling is "heeling" calves for branding.

which the herd was moved to its bed-ground for the night. At 8:00 P. M. those on "cocktail" were relieved by the first 8:00 to 10:00 P. M. guard. They drifted back to the wagons to take out and saddle their night horses and get some quick nodding until called for the two-hour night stint. Cowboys on roundup or trail never had enough sleep, but all had the faculty of dropping off wherever and whenever possible.

If it was rainy, all hands crowded their bedrolls side by side under tent canvas. Someone invariably got stepped on to the tune of fluent curses as sleepy guards came and went through the night. If it wasn't raining, the cowboys (careful not to bed down in an old buffalo wallow) found smooth spots and unrolled their bedrolls right in the open. Under a canopy of stars, these beds were protected top, bottom and sides, by a heavy canvas tarp. I soon got used to the hard earth as a firm but blessed mattress. Sid showed me how to head the bedroll into the breeze and to use the "tarp" cover like a sleeping bag for better warmth.

Life on this 79 trail herd ran along smoothly with just enough excitement in a day to spice the humdrum. Returning from guard one night, however, my horse stepped into a prairie dog hole, stumbled, and turned a complete somersault. Fortunately I was tossed

far enough ahead to scramble clear. We were both lucky. Neither sustained anything worse than a few scratches. But both my horse and I were shaking as I painfully picked myself up and climbed back aboard. Another time my night horse, loping back to the wagons on a black midnight, ran smack into a barbed wire fence. Again I was lucky, for we hit it head on and bounced back so the barbs didn't rake us.

Even on the best regulated roundup outfits, accidents could happen. But usually the cowboys would make a huge joke out of it. One day our nighthawk drove the bedwagon via Melstone, a tiny town across the Musselshell, to pick up mail and supplies before pitching night camp. There was no bridge, and the driver had to ford. In daylight he made it all right, but in recrossing in the dark he didn't hold his four-horse team diagonally enough upstream on a safe and solid gravel bar where the river was only about a foot or so deep. There was no moon, and the driver evidently couldn't see the pilot. Suddenly his team was swimming straight across. The wagon-bed was soon awash, and then it stuck on a high, impassable mud bank. To the accompaniment of much picturesque cursing on the nighthawk's part, and mocking jeers from cowboys nearby, they finally had to unhitch one horse and wait until morning to unload and rescue the mired bedwagon. Even

FIVE TYPICAL 79 COWBOYS took a day off from the range and had their picture taken in Billings, in about 1907. In the back row, left to right, are Paul Case, Ben (Nosie) Cowen, and Bill Hoffman. Seated in front, left to right, are Delos McBride and Larry O'Brien.

(Photo from the collection of W. E. Sutter.)

though some of the crew had to spend an uncomfortable night without beds or blankets, they took their lot philosophically and kidded the hapless driver without mercy.

Base pay for all 79 punchers, as I remember, was \$40 a month. That meant I was being paid almost the same as older and far more valuable hands. Of course I was supposed to do what they did, but even though I tried, I was far from full-fledged. My greatest fear was that I'd let my brother down, but nothing bothered Sid. As an experienced bronc fighter he got, besides the regular base pay, \$2.50 a head for breaking saddle horses. That was the usual way of paying more to the men who "rode the rough string."

Some top hands had a violent aversion to toting a lunch. Even if a man knew that he was to be out all day (as on an especially long horse roundup) he'd rather be found dead than with a package of sandwiches tied to his saddle. He would take nothing except the "makins" (cigarette tobacco and papers) or maybe a plug of "eatin" tobacco. As a sole concession to inner comfort, he would drink his fill of good water. And should he come across a sheepherder's wagon or a sod-buster's cabin he would think nothing of raiding it. A prized grab would be canned tomatoes, which provided both food and drink.

Although he might not carry a snack with him, the 79 hand stopped dead at any country beanery he might come across. One morning a bunch of us loped into Broadview, then a tiny new railroad and farming town, tied our horses to the hitching rail and filed in to occupy every available stool at the lunch counter. We had just eaten a big breakfast at camp. Yet we ordered and demolished platters of ham and eggs,



plus such trimmings as hot cakes, hash brown potatoes, coffee and toast. It was just as well, too, that we were so well charged. Soon after we had our work cut out for us in trying to force the trail herd across newly laid railroad tracks which were doing their part to end the cattleman's unobstructed range. Time and again, Watt McCool on point, and others of his crew, spurred over the rails while we pushed the drags into a brawling melee. Finally one old brave steer decided to chance it. Then the whole herd readily bolted after him.

One of our small talk perennials had to do with "loco weed," a plant that was dope to animals when it blossomed in the spring. When a group of us rode through a patch of this innocent looking flower, we would bet on which one of our horses was locoed. If a mount jogged through a patch as if it wasn't there, he evidently hadn't acquired the bad habit. But any horse that was addicted would duck his head and grab a mouthful. "Locoed" horses in our remuda were "crazy" in varying degrees. They were hardy enough, but such animals fought their heads while being bridled; and on the run they were hard to stop or turn.

Locoed cattle became thin and wan. One of these skin-and-bones steers in our trail herd wouldn't be driven. In



W. E. SUTTER (left) and SID ARMITAGE (right) are pictured at the Big Coulee ranch of the 79 in the Summer of 1909 before beginning a day of breaking saddle horses to be used in the remuda for the drive to the Dugout Ranch at the head of Big Dry Creek near Jordan, a distance of some 150 miles. Although the men are using their own saddles, both are astride Sorrel Bill, a favored mount in Sutter's string. Sid Armitage, now of Lander, Wyo., was employed as a bronc buster for the 79, and although barely out of his teens, was a top hand when this picture was taken. Sutter, who retired in 1948 as chief stock inspector for the Montana Livestock Commission, worked as a cowhand for the Montana Cattle Company and other outfits, and early began wearing the badge (under his coat) of a livestock detective. In the fall of 1910 he became wagon boss for the TN, a part of the 79 which ranged southeast of Miles City on the Powder River. Sutter was a top bronc rider, between 1913 and 1915, at the Miles City rodeo. In 1915 Austin Middleton, then sheriff of Custer County, hired Sutter as deputy sheriff to break up a cattle rustling and horse stealing operation in present-day Powder River county. When that county was organized in 1919, Sutter became its first sheriff. In 1922, he became range manager for the Portland Loan Company's Blackfoot Livestock Co., which ran 17,500 head of cattle on the Blackfoot reservation, and in 1927 he began his long career with the Montana Livestock Commission, becoming chief inspector in 1943. Since his retirement in 1948, Sutter and his wife have traveled about the country and are present'y living in Helena. With his vast knowledge of the cow business from the standpoint of the cowboy as well as law enforcement officer, Sutter has been of great help in the preparation of this feature on the famed 79.

disgust, we left him alone and each day he would drift further back. Although slow, he was also sure, for the next morning found him back in the herd. He had evidently staggered all night to catch up.

One day on the trail northward, we made contact with the Cross K, another big roundup outfit. I was surprised to find with it my chum, Chris Hoe of Billings. I was just saddling Baldy, the next horse on my string. To impress my friend I hopped right on without leading the horse a bit to settle the saddle. Whereupon Baldy, in one quick pitch, threw me over his head.

Cowboys generally (and those of the 79 were no exception) had little time for talk with nesters or "honyockers," since these new farmers were gradually closing the open range with their homesteading and fences. Yet these people were having a pretty rough time of it, and when they faced the reality, most cowhands were kind to them and their families. Some cowmen even invited the newcomers to the chuckwagon for what appeared to be their first square meal in a long time. If ladies came too, cook and cowhands were both embar-

rassed when the guests invariably asked what the cowboys' favorite three-gallon pailful of steamed pudding and sweet sauce was called. The question was always unsatisfactorily answered for the ladies, because the only name we knew it by was "son of a bitch" (probably because of its doubtful ingredients or origin)!

Since we butchered for our meat needs every few days (and our only refrigeration was a wet tarp)—the boss would often give such folks a generous chunk of meat before it spoiled. And speaking of farmers, one of the many things they had to learn about range country was that cattle were not accustomed to seeing humans afoot on a range. Out of pure curiosity, most critters would start toward any pedestrians crossing the prairie to pay our cow camp a call.

The 79 puncher certainly never thought of himself as romantic. But these new settlers definitely did. They avidly watched our activities. I particularly remember one farm family with a really easy-to-look-at daughter who walked out to our wagons one day. From the spring seat of the bedwagon

WINTER RANGE of the 79 on Big Elk Creek near Two Dot, west of Harlowton, may be seen in the background of this picture, taken in 1910. Left to right are Watt McCool, wagon boss; Rollo Herron, general manager for the 79, and Cowhand Ed Marcle. (W. E. Sutter photo.)

this young lady and her family watched as cowboys in the rope corral neatly lassoed the next horse on their string. I was so conscious of the fair audience that my loop missed every time. I finally gave up, embarrassed and disgusted.

By now the herd was converging slowly toward the good fattening range of the Big Dry. Wet streams, springs and waterholes which we had found south of Roundup and Melstone had become increasingly dry. We knew from the ominous tone of our thirsty herd that this spelled trouble. As we neared Big Dry Creek, however, our bellowing cattle smelled water. They moved toward it at a faster and faster gait, ending in a full run. All hands were mustered to spread the herd as thinly as possible along the "crick." We finally found enough water to quench the herd's first wild thirst and turned them loose. Our trail drive was finished!

Back-trailing to the 79 Big Coulee home ranch proved a picnic. There was little to do but travel and move camp. We had plenty of time to catch up on our sleep, play poker. And occasionally we detoured, by two and threes, for a big night in the frontier towns which we skirted.

In retrospect, some of my warmest memories are of the 79 cowboys that I came to know at a time when I was still wet behind the ears. They flavored their talk with the rawest language imaginable, yet all were perfect gentlemen in the presence of ladies.

Also in retrospect, I remember with a warm and nostalgic feeling the names of some of the streams we crossed 52 years ago: Alkali, Antelope Springs, Big Timber, Canyon, Calf, Cow Gulch, Crooked, Comanche, Dead Man, Dry, Fish, Lodge Pole, Lost Horse, Lost, McCormick Springs, Painted Robe, Pompey, Razor, Rattlesnake, Sheep, Sweet Grass, Six Shooter, Twenty-Mile, West Buf-



falo, White Beaver, and many others I can't remember.

Rivers in our orbit were the Yellowstone and Musselshell, and of course the mighty Missouri, although our outfit's activities didn't extend that far north. From the high plateaus we saw such famous mountain ranges as the Crazy, Blue, Bears Paw, Bull, Pryor, Beartooth.

After more than a half century of varying experiences, I can truthfully say I never enjoyed a more healthful or stimulating summer. I deeply appreciate the assistance I have had in recalling some of these events from far more experience cowhands still living. I particularly have in mind William E. (Wild Bill) Sutter, who spent many years as a top hand, as a range law enforcement man and finally as chief inspector for Montana's Livestock Commission before his retirement; my brothers, Sid of Lander, Wyo. and Kenneth of Billings, and my artist-friend, J. K. (The Curlew) Ralston who once rode for the 79 and also hangs his hat in Billings.

Any mistakes in the narrative are mine, not theirs. Old timers who may read this will know infinitely more about the glorious days of the 79 than I do, but few will put it in writing, as it should be. To all of them I say *Salude*; and may the rangeland never die!



# A NEW FOCUS ON THE SIOUX WAR

by MARK H. BROWN

Once the Savage Sioux Were Under Control  
The Day of The Cattlemen Dawned Brighter  
Along Vast Expanses of the Northern Plains

This distillation of source material researched by Mark Brown for his new book "The Plainsmen of the Yellowstone" is not as far out of context in this issue as may first appear. Wallis Huidekoper, noted Montana cowman, once said that there were three basic barriers to the range cattle industry on the frontier: The Indian, the buffalo, and lack of transportation to market. Mr. Brown's thesis clearly relates to the breaking of the first—and probably the greatest of these barriers—the Sioux Nation.

After the coming of the railroad and subjugation of the Indian, the Yellowstone drainage became one of the great cattle regions of the West, which it has continued to be to this day. Granville Stuart, Montana's most articulate early Cattle King, gave the Big Horn drainage of the Yellowstone first priority of all available range when he made his historic survey before establishment of the great DHS Ranch, initially capitalized at \$150,000, in the Spring of 1880. (But it was not located there because of respect for the Crow Indian Reservation, and so DHS located instead on Flatwillow, east of the Judith Basin and south of the Missouri.)

Certainly the Yellowstone country's part in the Sioux War was significant, and in this re-analysis, Mark Brown sets the stage for the day of the cattlemen which inevitably followed the final taming of the terrible Sioux.

"FIGURES DON'T lie, but liars can figure." So went a little jingle a half century ago that could be backed up with convincing algebraic equations which proved that, "Therefore, one equals two." Many who have made an effort to delve into the subject of history know that the field of mathematics is not the only one where formulae can be marshalled which supposedly prove something which cannot be substantiated by facts.

Curiously, most studies of what was undoubtedly the most spectacular Indian war of the West—the Sioux War of 1876, sometimes called Sitting Bull's War—are rather thoroughly permeated with serious garbling and wild distortion. The story of the military campaigns has been badly beclouded by undue attention given to the sensational death of a flamboyant officer (Custer) and a large part of his command.

However, by far the most serious errors are those which have been made in connection with the causes of this war. These shortcomings hinge around two things. One is that it has been fashionable to make the U. S. Government the whipping boy for what occurred. The other is that many who have written so glibly are obviously poor students of both background data and geography—two extremely important fields in any study dealing with military history.

Although there may be some justification for overlooking a few of the causes of this conflict, there can be no excuse for ignoring one military document, dated September 23, 1876, in which some of the causes are listed—particularly when it contains this thought-provoking statement: "*The occupation by the settlers of the Black*



BLACK HILLS EXPEDITION, undertaken in 1874 to explore the region and headed by General George A. Custer, is pictured here as it assembled on the plains. The rumors of rich deposits of gold in the Black Hills which resulted from the expedition engendered an influx of whites, adding to the tension among the Sioux. This picture, originally a stereoptic study, was taken by W. H. Illingworth, a private photographer who accompanied the expedition.

Hills country had nothing to do with the hostilities which have been in progress." This sentence may be found in the annual report of the Commanding General of the Department of the Platte. The author was General George Crook, and it was written immediately following his return to Fort Omaha after leading two expeditions against Sitting Bull and his followers. If the unsavory rape of the Black Hills had "nothing to do" with the war which was then in full swing, just what did bring this struggle about?

To properly understand what happened, it is necessary to leaf back through the pages of history to the year of 1727. This is the date when the French, who were then starting to probe the western wilderness for a route to the *Mer de l'Ouest* (the Pacific Ocean), began to realize that the Sioux were a proud, arrogant, warlike people. Eleven years later, la Verendrye lost to them a party containing his favorite son, a priest, and nineteen men.

Pressured by the Chippewas, who had acquired firearms from the traders, the Sioux slowly withdrew from the Great Lakes region and moved westward.

Lewis and Clark found some of these people along the Missouri in 1805 and, probably, the founding of Fort Laramie in 1834 provided an excuse to roam still farther to the west. And when emigrants began to travel the Oregon Trail in great numbers these Indians were not long in discovering that this was a fertile field for scalps and plunder.

All of this may be likened to the prologue of a play. To continue the comparison, Act I begins in the summer of 1851. Thomas Fitzpatrick, Indian Agent for the Upper Platte and Arkansas Agency, had prevailed upon the Government to hold a grand council with all the tribes of the northern part of the high plains for the purpose of working out a treaty which would sta-

Author of two good books, "The Frontier Years" and "Before Barbed Wire," Mark H. Brown of Trail's End, Alta, Iowa, has been a dedicated western history hobbyist, collector and writer for many years. "The Plainsmen of the Yellowstone," just published in handsome format by G. P. Putnam's Sons, represents his most prodigious effort. Using a broad canvas and a time span of more than a century and a half, Mr. Brown tells the fascinating story of the great, sprawling, historic basin of the Yellowstone River, from the French explorations to the homesteading "honeycker" who wounded the prairies with his plow.

bilize relations between the Indians and the travelers going westward. Such a treaty was drawn up and approved by the Indian leaders, later — with some changes—by Congress, but it came to naught because it was never officially promulgated by the President.

Although "The Treaty of 1851" never really became a treaty, one very noteworthy precedent was set. When the general areas were outlined which were considered to be the domain of each tribe, all agreed that the region belonging to the Crows consisted of almost the entire Yellowstone *Basin* — except for the country east of the channel of the Powder River, and that part of the Yellowstone *valley* between the mouth of the Powder and the Missouri. Fifteen years later, the same bands of Teton Sioux who approved this division of territory were insisting fiercely that a very considerable part of this area belonged to *them*.

These squatters' rights of the Crows extended back a good many years before 1851. When the Northwest Company's trader, Francois Antoine Larocque, traveled with the Crows over a considerable part of the Yellowstone Basin in 1805—the year before William Clark and his party floated down the Yellowstone—they obviously considered this area their hunting grounds. And if the *Gens des Chevaux* (Horse Indians) with whom la Verendrye's two sons and their two companions hoped to travel westward from the village of the "Mantanées" (Mandans?) were actually the Crows, then the Absaroka were in this area well before 1742.

Indian depredations along the Oregon trail brought a series of developments in the years following this first "treaty" meeting. Public clamor finally forced the Government to dispatch a military expedition into the Powder River country in 1865, but this was a futile effort—for a number of reasons: Even as the soldiers hunted for Sioux marauders, pacifists argued in Washington that kind words and not bullets held the

solution to the problem. And in the end they prevailed, leaving the Teton Sioux in possession of a considerable portion of what, in 1851, had been firmly agreed was Crow Country.

Having now demonstrated that it was unwilling to back its military forces with effective support, the Government tried to do two things which were dramatically opposed: It tried to make a treaty with the hostile Sioux who believed that they had won a decisive victory, while on the other hand it agreed with the now clamoring settlements in western Montana that they should have a road—with *military protection*—through the very area where the military expedition against the Sioux had fizzled. When troops passed through Fort Laramie in 1866 on their way to fortify what was then commonly known as the Montana Road (alias the Bozeman Trail), the Sioux left the "treaty" proceedings in a rage and began a determined offensive against the soldiers and all who tried to use the road.

If the Government was being illogical, the hostiles were acting with even less reason, Colonel Carrington's wife, in her exposé of official muddling during 1866-1868, recorded the proceedings of a council held at Fort Phil Kearney in July 1866 with certain Cheyenne chiefs. When the question was asked why the Sioux and Cheyennes claimed land which belonged to the Crows, three of them answered promptly, "The Sioux helped us. We stole the hunting grounds of the Crows because they were the best . . . We fight the Crows because they will not take half and give us peace with the other half." It is small wonder that discerning Army officers and others regarded with scorn the "treaty" which was finally negotiated.

Whatever claims the Crows may have had to this country were abrogated by the Treaty of 1868. This gave to the Sioux as a reservation what is, roughly, that part of South Dakota lying west of the Missouri River. But far more

important were the provisions contained in Article XVI:

The United States hereby agrees and stipulates that the country north of the North Platte River and east of the summits of the Big Horn Mountains, shall be held and conceded Indian territory, and also stipulates and agrees that no white person or persons shall be permitted to settle upon or occupy any portion of the same; or without the consent of the Indians, first had and obtained, to pass through the same; and it is further agreed by the United States, that within ninety days after the conclusion of peace with all the bands of the Sioux nation, the military posts now established in the territory, in this article named, shall be abandoned, and that the road leading to them, and by them to the settlements of Montana, shall be closed.

Some confusion exists as to the extent of these Unceded Hunting Grounds (which included part of northwestern Nebraska, the northeastern quarter of what is now Wyoming, and the *extreme* southeastern corner of Montana). For all practical purposes, the northern boundary, as defined when the Sioux ceded this area on September 26, 1876, coincides with the present Wyoming-Montana state line except for a small area east of the channel of the Powder River, a matter about which it cannot be presumed that the renegade Sioux were ignorant. Nor can it be presumed that they did not know that Articles III, IV, and V specifically prohibited them from committing depredations on the whites!

The commissioners who negotiated with the Sioux at Fort Laramie in 1868 also negotiated a treaty with the Crows at the same time. This set aside as a reservation for the Absaroka that part of Montana lying west of the 107th Meridian (near Sheridan, Wyoming) between the Wyoming-Montana state line and the channel of the Yellowstone river. Those who would understand why the Government had to chastise the Sioux in 1876 must keep clearly in mind the geographical boundaries of both the Unceded Hunting Grounds and the Crow Reservation.

In the years following 1868 it was common practice to divide the Sioux into two general groups—those who made a pretense of living on the reservation, and those who did not. The

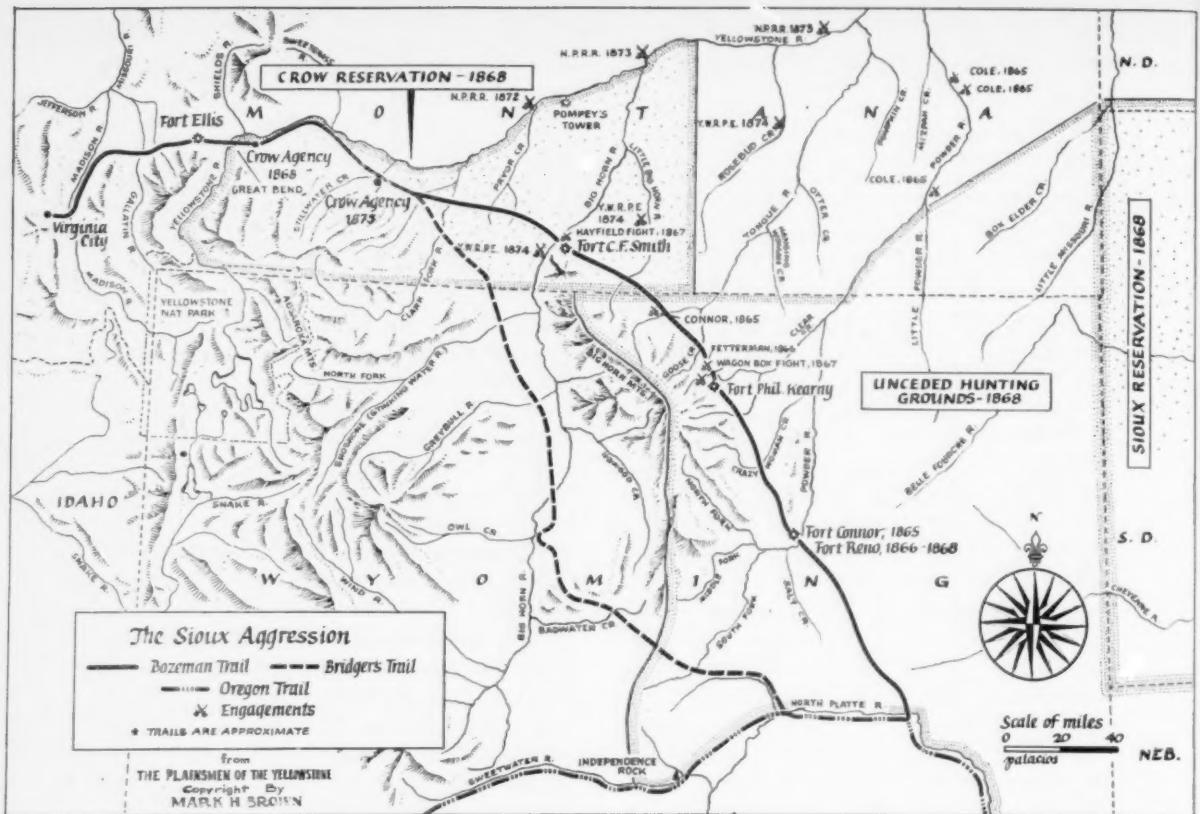
latter, a small group, were generally referred to as *renegades* and their guiding spirit was the medicine man, Sitting Bull. It was this fraction which comprised the hard core of the hostiles and it varied in size from season to season. During the summer months, many left the reservation and joined these people in their wanderings, and when winter came they went back to the agency. It was this fraction which floated back and forth that accounted for a large part of the formidable force which assembled in the valley of the Little Big Horn in June 1876.

Sitting Bull's followers did not attend the negotiations held at Fort Laramie in 1868—nor did any of the commissioners dare go out and try to persuade them to come in. This task was performed single-handed by Father DeSmet who, with an escort of friendly Sioux, found these people along the Powder River (a few miles above its mouth) and was successful in getting representatives to accompany him to Fort Rice, on the Missouri, where the treaty was finally concluded.

Thus, in the summer of 1868, this group was apparently not living on what became either the Unceded Hunting Grounds or the Sioux Reservation. Furthermore, evidence indicates that they were not interested in living within the confines of either of these areas, or submitting to any regulations. Only the year before this treaty was signed, Sitting Bull told trader Charles Larpenleur at Fort Union:

I have killed, robbed, and injured too many white men to believe in a good peace. They are medicine, and I would eventually die a lingering death. I had rather die on the field of battle . . . [The other Sioux and Assiniboin had better] do as he did—go to the buffalo country, eat plenty of meat, and when they wanted a good horse, go to some fort and steal one. Look at me . . . See if I am poor, or my people either. The whites may get me at last, as you say, but I will have good times until then.

The finding of gold in the Black Hills by a government-sponsored expedition in the summer of 1874 and the rush of greedy prospectors into what the press heralded as "The Land of Promise" is



a well known part of the Sioux story. Equally well known are the incidents which followed — the objections of the "reservation" Sioux, the feeble and ineffective effort of the Government to eject the trespassers, the stormy session at Fort Robinson on September 20, 1875 when the bitter Sioux refused to sell the Black Hills, and, finally, the much criticized ultimatum was sent out in the early winter to the roving bands ordering them to come in and settle on the reservation *at once*.

The picture presented by these facts is a most deceptive one. Obviously, the Government was responsible for an unsavory situation. And, unfortunately, the fact that an estimated 1,500 warriors left the reservation the following summer and joined the hostiles has served to further screen the true causes of this Indian war. Those who have assumed that this situation was to blame for the war have failed to appreciate the background which Crook summarized in the

one pregnant sentence previously quoted.

It is doubtful if General Crook, who had been transferred from Arizona in the Spring of 1875, was familiar with all the ramifications of the Sioux problem. However, the previously noted annual report for 1876 shows clearly that he was familiar with both the stipulations contained in the Treaty of 1868 and what had been happening within the confines of the Department of the Platte. His report begins as follows:

At the date of my annual report for 1875, September 15, the settlers along the line of the Pacific Railroad in Wyoming, Nebraska and Colorado, were very much excited and exasperated by the repeated incursions made upon them by Indians coming from the north, and although many of the trails of stolen stock ran directly upon the Sioux Reservation, the Agency Indians always asserted that the depredations were committed by certain hostile bands under Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull and other outlaw chiefs.

These bands roamed over a vast extent of country, making the Agencies their base of supplies, their recruiting and ordnance depots, and were so closely connected by intermarriage, interest and common cause with the Agency In-

dians, that it was difficult to determine where the line of peaceably disposed ceased and the hostile commenced.

In fact it was well known that the treaty of 1868 has been regarded by the Indians as an instrument binding upon us but not binding upon them . . .

After quoting Articles III, IV, and V in which the Sioux agreed not to commit depredations on the whites, Crook stated:

It is notorious that, from the date of this treaty to the present, there has been no time that the settlers were free from the very offences laid down in the sentences quoted.

While this guerilla warfare was a constant irritation, what happened in the Yellowstone valley—often far removed from the nearest point of the Unceded Hunting Grounds—was much worse.

To properly understand the incidents which happened in the Department of the Dakota (which included most of what is now North Dakota and Montana), some knowledge of the history of this area is necessary. Prospectors and settlers of various kinds flocked to the gold fields in southwestern Montana in the early 1860's, and soon the fertile valley of the Gallatin River became an important agricultural area for the gold camps. The treaty of 1868 closed the most direct land route to "America"—or "the States" as it was more commonly called. In the same year, Fort Ellis was established to guard the western ends of the Bozeman and Bridger Passes, which led directly from the upper end of the Gallatin valley to the "Big Bend" of the Yellowstone. Bozeman sprang up near the post; and the Government established the Crow Agency about fifteen miles below the site of the present town of Livingston, on the Yellowstone. As the settlements increased in size, so did their insistent clamor for a satisfactory road to the east. Stimulated by this, and the railway surveys of 1853, the Northern Pacific Railroad was pushed westward from Minnesota. In 1871, surveying parties were poised at Bozeman and at Fort Rice ready to survey the route between the Bozeman Pass and Bis-

marck. This, then, was the background for the Sioux troubles in Montana Territory in an area in which the Treaty of 1868 gave them no treaty rights whatever—except for one very small area which is of practically no importance.

Father DeSmet found the camp of the renegades, which he estimated at 4-5,000 souls—"big and little," near the mouth of the Powder. Old newspaper files are mute proof that these Indians continued to roam over much of southeastern Montana, hunting, stealing, fighting the Crows, and murdering whites in the years following the signing of the treaty:

(August 8, 1870) ". . . The Crows . . . were out on their buffalo hunts but were attacked by the Sioux, and compelled to abandon the hunting ground . . . Some seventy lodges of the Sioux are on the [Yellowstone River], about seventy miles from the Agency, and one thousand lodges at old Fort C. F. Smith. . . ."

(October 27, 1870) ". . . a party of 25 men . . . were cutting lumber at the mouth of the Yellowstone river, six miles from Fort Buford when they were suddenly attacked by a party of Sioux, led by 'Sitting Bull' . . . Chas Teck, . . . some 500 yards from the party . . . was suddenly surrounded, killed and scalped, being completely riddled with arrows . . ."

(July 26, 1871) [A traveler from Bozeman reported in Helena] ". . . About 10 o'clock on Monday morning a band of Indians, supposed to have been Sioux or Crows, were seen . . . four miles below Hamilton . . . running off stock . . . two men were shot and killed [in cold blood] . . ."

(July 27, 1874) "Indians, supposed to be Sioux and the same party that lingered in the vicinity of the [Crow] Agency two or three weeks recently . . . again appeared in the Yellowstone valley Sunday. Parties coming in from that vicinity to Bozeman were fired upon along the road and kept in the rear, while the Indians came to within

a mile of Bozeman and run off several large herds of horses, and even cut the picket ropes of horses around Fort Ellis and run them off . . . ."

(July 24, 1875) ". . . On the 16th instant a war party of Sioux visited [Carroll, the "low-water" port on the Missouri] and succeeded in stampeding a herd of horses. Not content with this herd, in which there were twelve splendid animals, the gentle wards [of the Government] paid us another visit the following day . . . ."

Although some settlers disliked all Indians and hence the Crows, all hated the Sioux in no uncertain fashion. In 1872, when some consideration was being given the idea of moving the Crows to the Judith Basin, south of the Missouri, the editor of the Bozeman *Avant Courier* stated in an editorial:

It is a well known fact, notwithstanding assertion to the contrary, that the Crow Indians, so far from exhibiting, as a tribe, hostility to the whites, have looked upon them as their friends and protectors, and instead of being a source of perpetual menace to our people, they have been an aid to the military posts established on the frontier, as, by their well-known animosity to the various bands of the Sioux nation, they have assisted in keeping that warlike tribe away from our settlements, and past experience has demonstrated that a raid by the Sioux in force would bring with it an attendant train of horror before which our trouble with the red devils, bad as they have been, would pale into the veriest insignificance.

In April and May of 1874, Governor B. F. Potts (a rather scatterbrained individual) deluged the Secretary of Interior with letters urging that the Crows be issued a supply of first-class arms, and that they, together with a force of frontiersmen, be encouraged to initiate a determined offensive against the Sioux. Secretary Delano's answer dated May 22nd is particularly interesting because it admits—officially—that the Sioux were a source of serious trouble before Custer found gold in the Black Hills. The Secretary wrote:

The solution to the "Sioux Question" cannot be reached by the method indicated. Its settlement would be, by such means, greatly retarded, and . . . can only result in exciting the Sioux to greater hostility to the whites; and endanger the success of efforts now being made to bring the disaffected tribes upon Reservations and prevent

the peaceful progress of the various wagon trains through the country from Judith Basin to Carroll . . . ."

As noted, the Northern Pacific Railroad surveyors began to work out a line between Bismarck and Bozeman in 1871. In this year the party from the east lost two men to unidentified hostile Indians on the prairies of Dakota. When the western party returned to Bozeman the *Avant Courier* noted:

The party saw no hostile Indians on the trip, although fresh signs were visible every day . . . About one hundred and fifty lodges of Sioux were ascertained as being camped on the Big Horn. The Crows were with the surveying party a portion of the time, making several sorties, capturing stock from the Sioux, which showed them in close proximity to the party.

The next year the military escort with the eastern party had two brushes with the Sioux in the eastern part of the Yellowstone valley and one surveyor and some scouts had narrow escapes. The western party was heavily escorted by Major E. M. Baker and 420 soldiers and civilians. When this force was camped along the Yellowstone a few miles east of where Billings is now located, a large force of Sioux—probably Hunkpapa under Black Moon and with Sitting Bull present—attempted a surprise attack before dawn. After several hours of skirmishing the Indians withdrew having killed two soldiers and wounding two others. For reasons which are no longer clear, the survey party turned back a few days later.

In 1873 the eastern party came back to complete the survey between the mouth of the Powder and the vicinity of Pompeys Pillar. This was an unwieldy body numbering 1,531 soldiers and scouts, and 375 civilians—exclusive of the surveyors. The Sioux dogged their steps from a point opposite the mouth of the Tongue until the work was completed, picking off stragglers and fighting two engagements with the cavalry portion of the escort. One of these was an attempted ambush and the other a pitched battle just below the mouth of the Big Horn in which an estimated 800-1,000 warriors took part.



LT. JAMES H. BRADLEY, youthful Infantryman who was stationed at Forts Benton and Shaw during the Sioux War period and who lost his life in the Big Hole Battle with the Nez Perce in 1877, was an industrious writer and researcher who left a wealth of diary material and journals, making him the best known subordinate officer ever to serve in Montana.

Since gold fever continued in Montana Territory for years after the first rich finds, early in 1874 the Yellowstone Wagon Road and Prospecting Expedition left Bozeman for the Yellowstone valley. Ostensibly, the primary purpose of this group was to work out a road from Bozeman to the supposed head of navigation on the Yellowstone River but the 147 men who made up this group were actually interested in but one thing — gold! This well organized party was composed of experienced frontiersmen and Civil War veterans. Before they returned they had whipped the Sioux in three fights: One of these took place just outside the eastern boundary of the Crow Reservation; the other two in the valley of the Little Big Horn — well inside the boundary. One participant estimated the force opposing them in the last fight at "not . . . less than one thousand," and Lieutenant James Bradley wrote a year or so later:

The number of Indians who participated in the battle was variously estimated at 1000 to 1500. They afterwards admitted at Fort Peck that it was the combined force of three large camps under the leadership of the famous Sitting Bull.

In a letter dated March 7, 1875, the commanding officer of Fort Ellis made this summary of the situation for General Terry who commanded the Department of Dakota:

These Indians controlled by Sitting Bull are the head and font of all the difficulties with the Indians belonging north of the Platte . . . They are mostly Uncapas, with bands of Broken Arrows, Blackfoot Sioux and Yanconians and usually about thirty lodges of Northern Cheyennes . . .

Sitting Bull's bands are the ones who fought General Stanley, Col. Baker [who escorted the N.P.R.R. Surveyors], and the Citizens expedition last spring, that went down the Yellowstone and who raided in the Yellow Stone Valley and stole horses last Summer from the head of Gallatin Valley.

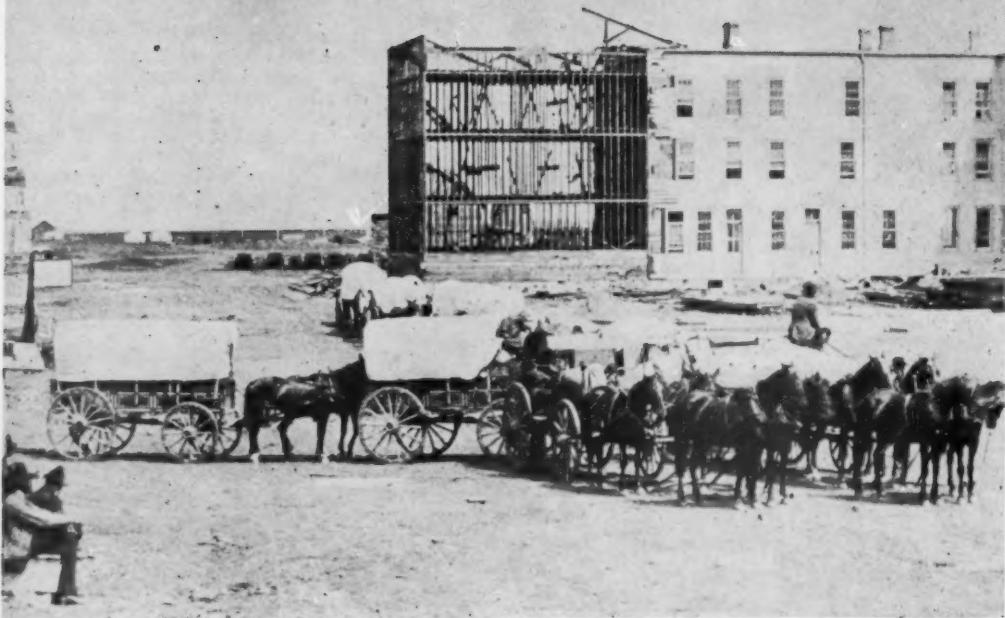
They are openly and defiantly hostile and occupying a section of country centrally located to the different Indian Agencies excite these Indians more or less to hostilities to the whites and commit depredations about the different agencies to involve the Agency Indians in trouble.

These Indians keep the road from Montana to the east completely shut up and are of great injury to the development of Montana . . .

These Indians hold complete control of the Yellow Stone and Powder River Country and fight any party of citizens who go into it and are looked upon by a great many Indians at the agencies as being able to defy the power of the Government, the effect of which is discontent and mutinous Condition among the agency Indians hard to control by the Government Officials and Chiefs disposed to be peaceful.

Although the Sioux renegades had precipitated a never-ending string of complaints, trouble became inevitable late in 1874, when the newly-appointed Crow Agent, ex-Confederate general Dexter E. Clapp, requested permission to move the Crow Agency to Rosebud Creek. It was one thing for the Secretary of Interior or the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to cold-shoulder complaints from settlers and Army officers, but it was quite another matter to resolve complaints which arose within their own official "family."

Clapp's reasons for wishing to move were sound. His request was approved even though it raised a storm of protests from nervous citizens of Bozeman and the commanding officers of both Forts Ellis and Shaw. Although the reasoning of the civilians and the military were selfish, those of the latter group did have some logic behind them — the new location was 73 miles farther away from Fort Ellis and squarely on one of the routes used by Sioux war parties going to and from the upper Yellowstone. Clapp started to build the new agency in June 1875, and trouble was not long in coming. On the 5th of the following month he began a letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs with, "I am unfortunately obliged to report depredations and a murder committed at or near the New Crow Agency



SUPPLY WAGONS for the Black Hills Expedition are shown assembling in Bismarck, Dakota Territory, in this remarkable picture from the Northern Pacific Railway archives.

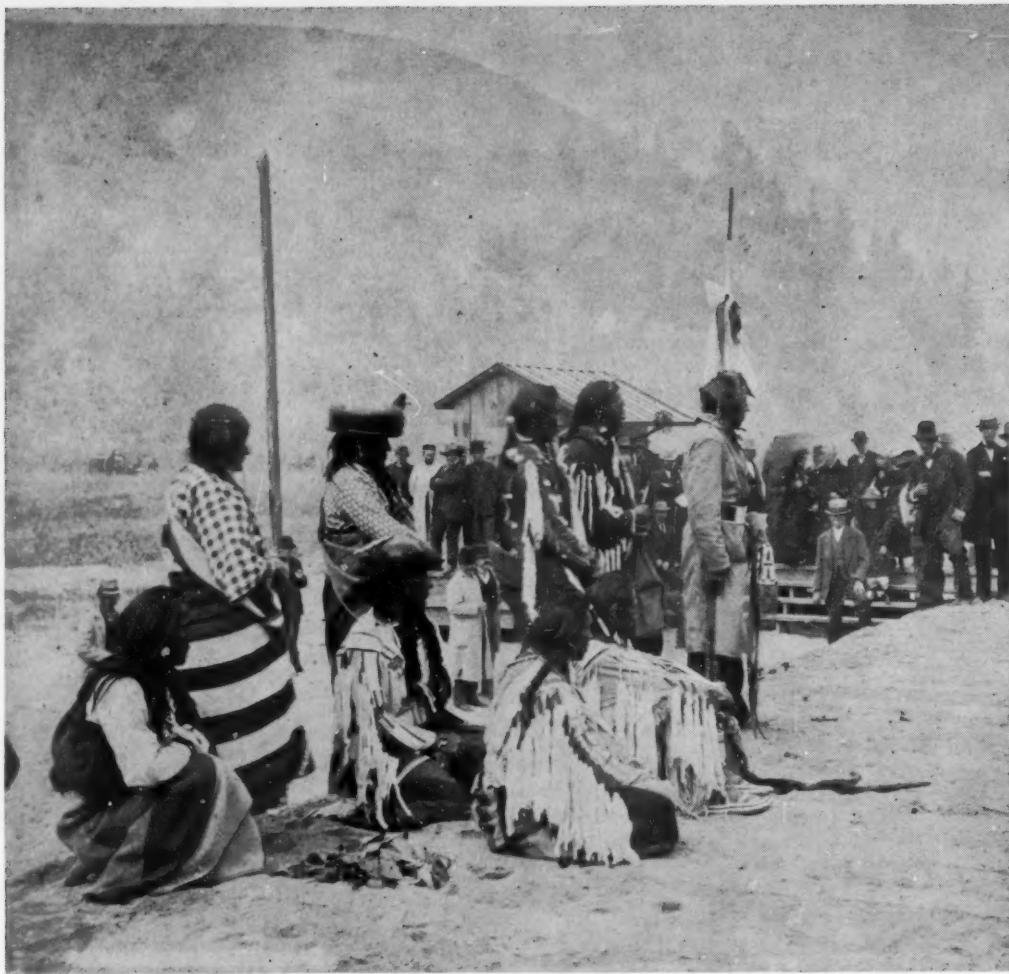
by Sioux Indians." Other letters which followed at more or less regular intervals related similar troubles—employees killed and wounded, cattle-horses-mules stolen, and so much danger that a large part of his labor force was tied up with guard duties. And he begged that pressure be put on the Army to furnish protection—which the commanding officers at Forts Shaw and Ellis flatly refused to provide.

There were no uncertainties in identifying the hostiles as Sioux and at times they left behind telltale articles which had been issued at agencies. In his annual report dated March 4, 1876, Clapp detailed troubles which had occurred in the Yellowstone valley during the past year—17 attacks made on whites (as well as a number on Crow camps), 9 men killed and 10 wounded, 86 horses and mules stolen, 52 oxen killed or stolen, and delays caused in his construction work which cost an estimated \$4,500 - 6,000. Clapp also pointed out that the Crows continually complained that the Sioux were better armed and better mounted than they,

"that the larger and most fertile portion of their reservation is permanently occupied by their enemies," and that the impression was being created that the whites could not protect themselves, much less the Crows. And,

I respectfully urge, that such action shall be taken as shall effectively quiet the hostile Indians in the Yellowstone country, and give to the whites peace, and to the Crows opportunity for the progress of civilization.

These incidents, added to the complaints of civilians on the frontier and the pointed criticism of Army officers, finally drove home the fact that the olive branch which certain misguided individuals had persisted in waving for the past decade was definitely *not* the answer to how to handle the Sioux renegades. It was one thing to shrug off Colonel Stanley's Fort Peck a "den of iniquity" and Crook's saying that the Red Cloud Agency "deliberately harbored thieves", but it was quite another matter to meet Clapp's blunt statements that the Sioux were raising hell on the Crow Reservation and that it was high time that someone put an end to it. It



THE FINAL CURTAIN—Indians gather in council at the ceremonial driving of the Northern Pacific's last spike on Sept. 8, 1883, at Gold Creek, just west of present Garrison, Montana. It signalled the completion of the railroad nearly 20 years after it was chartered and after "renegade" tribes had ceaselessly tried to hamper its westward expansion. (From an original picture by Frank Jay Haynes in the Historical Society of Montana collection).

was only a question of time until the Secretary of Interior had to admit that his employees were not capable of handling the situation. Finally, in 1875, the General of the Army was given the task of doing what discerning officers had always been certain they would eventually have to do—*whip the Sioux into submission.*

This is why Crook was correct when he wrote, "*The occupation by the settlers of the Black Hills had nothing to do with the hostilities which have been in progress.*" Likewise, this is why it is irrelevant to argue that the order requiring the hostiles to come on the

reservation in mid-winter was unreasonable and inhumane. There is not the slightest evidence to indicate they would have complied had the weather been perfect.

When these incidents are placed in their proper geographical relation, the campaigns of this war take on a new appearance. Only one fight of note, the Battle of Slim Buttes, took place on either the Unceded Hunting Grounds or the Sioux Reservation. And, of course, the famous battle of the Little Big Horn which cost the lives of 265 soldiers and scouts was fought—*on the Crow Reservation!*

# Reader's



# Romuda

*Edited by Robert G. Athearn*

"THE FUR TRADE," by Paul Chrisler Phillips, with concluding chapters by J. W. Smurr. (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1961. 2 vols., boxed, 712 and 704 pp., ill., \$16.50). The scholarly review of this monumental study of the fur trade is by Merrill J. Mattes, regional historian of region two of the National Park Service.

The trend in everything, including books, is "king-size." Now we have the monarch of all works on the fur trade, a hefty two-volume production which weighs 8 pounds on my bathroom scales and measures in the neighborhood of 1,400 pages, including 50 chapters, an 80-page bibliography and something like 3,000 footnotes. The price seems lavish, but this, too, is a trend, one aspect of a rather odd schizophrenia in the publishing business which is symptomized by a rash of colossal books which cost the equivalent of one's weekly take-home pay, as well as a flood of glossy pocket size paper-backs which can be had for a few pennies.

Even the price of "The Fur Trade," apparently, does not represent the true value, production-wise, of this work, for the Ford Foundation is credited with a contribution to the project.

Does the quality of "The Fur Trade" match its quantity? After taking time out to plow through every printed page (a practice not recommended to anyone but other reviewers) I can testify that this work is a monument to scholarship as well as to the publishing industry. It is skillfully organized, competently written, heavily documented, and as definitive on the subject as anything we are likely to see in our time. But this ponderous set of books is not light vacation reading. It will be used primarily as a reference work, possessed by the more affluent student and the more sophisticated library.

It was not my privilege to have Professor Phillips as a teacher (he was for many years on the history faculty of Montana

State University at Missoula) but on occasion I compared fur trade notes with him. I last saw him in 1953 at the Mississippi Valley Historical Association meeting at Lexington, Kentucky, a wispy gray man with a gentle sense of humor that all too rarely shows through the massive text of his masterpiece.

In his preface Phillips discloses how his grand scheme gradually evolved, and how its pursuit took him to Canada, England and France as well as the likely repositories in the United States. (The Hudson's Bay Company of London, apparently, is the one painful exception to the author's acknowledgment of cheerful cooperation of all libraries encountered). The central idea is so all-encompassing that it is understandable that its consummation would take a lifetime. In the author's own words: "... the [North American] fur trade was not essentially a frontier problem, but rather a subject of high political and economic importance to many nations. It contributed much to the economic development of Western Europe and was a cause of international rivalries that often led to war. The fur trade was a prime incentive for the struggle for domination over the vast regions in America north of the Rio Grande."

Phillips' era is a "heroic age" which spans three centuries and, although the central stage is North America, there are mighty commercial and diplomatic repercussions in Europe and Asia. From 1534, when Jacques Cartier met natives who "made signs to us to land, holding up skins at the end of sticks," to 1846, marking the settlement of the Oregon Question, the author works on a vast canvas to depict the welter of colonial, international and intra-national aspirations and rivalries that were motivated by the lust for profits in peltries. (The American Revolution marks the division point between the two volumes.) North of Mexico furs proved to be more potent by far than the futile search for gold or the persistent doomed search for the Western Sea.

Interwoven with the threads of commerce and politics are those of geographical exploration. Phillips gives generous space to the cavalcade of discoverers, from Samuel de Champlain to John Colter, but he is interested in the implications rather than the acts of discovery, and he does not pretend to displace another notable historian in the field. DeVoto's "Course of Empire" will continue to be a major companion work.

The fur trade of the trans-Mississippi West does not occupy 15 per cent of Dr. Phillips fur trade universe. This is proper and correct. Phillips made no attempt to duplicate or supersede Chittenden's great 3-volume work, "The American Fur Trade of the Far West," nor is he concerned in the same degree with details of geography and personality.

Phillips died in 1956, and the imposing task of completion fell to his widow and to Professor John Welling Smurr. The latter has done a gratifying job of general editing, and writing the last three chapters (including the late Southwest and Rocky Mountain eras, and a commendable recapitulation of "The Fur Trade in History.")

It seems unworthy, perhaps, to cite small errors and omissions in a work of these epic proportions, but certain corrections are warranted if the cost of eventual reprinting is not prohibitive. On p. 495, Fort Pierre is given as "St. Pierre." The Joncaire of p. 498, I, is otherwise spelled Jonquiere on p. 512, et. seq. Conspicuous and regrettable omissions in Volume II are the episodes of the Returning Astorians of 1812 and the pivotal Ashley-Leavenworth campaign against the Rees on the Upper Missouri of 1823.

Some errors result from a basic lack of interest in geographical fine points. A 1727 French post among the Sioux (p. 492, I) is never identified as to name or location. The long-standing but now demolished hoax about Yellowstone Park being known to fur traders as "Colter's Hell" is innocently perpetuated by these Olympians (p. 261, II). On the other hand, Phillips specifically denies Colter credit which is now generally given for the discovery of the Tetons and Jackson Hole. There is much unresolved confusion over the identification of Grand Portage on Lake Superior, and its related streams.

The maps are not distinguished, but they are adequate. The illustrations are excellent but are in only random relationship to the text. But these are gnats on the elephant's hide. Everything considered, "The Fur Trade" is a new landmark in American historical literature.

AUTUMN, 1961

"SIERRA RAILWAY," by Dorothy Deane Newell. (Howell-North, Berkeley, Calif., 1960. iv plus 181 pp., ill., index, \$6.00). Our reviewer is Dr. Clarence F. McIntosh, associate professor of history at Chico State College in California, and currently president of the Conference of California Historical Societies.

This attractive book is a popular history of a California shortline railroad, whose tracks once stretched over one hundred forty-two miles of relatively flat San Joaquin Valley and rugged Sierra Nevada Mountain terrain. Organized in 1896 by a strong-willed individualist, Thomas S. Bullock, the Sierra Railway, unlike so many shortlines, still remains in operation over fifty-seven miles of track between the valley town of Oakdale and the mountain hamlet of Tuolumne. The author is the daughter of William H. Newell, who joined the company as its chief engineer in 1898, and thereafter directed the building of the line, and is the sister of Paul Newell, who is currently on its board of directors.

Freight from mining and lumber operations was the prospect that attracted Bullock, who had previously built railroads in Arizona and Mexico, to the southern Mother Lode country. He persuaded other capitalists, principally the Crockers of San Francisco, to back the enterprise. Once the first portion of the line was completed, the promoters also attempted, with some success, to stimulate passenger traffic, especially that going to Yosemite Valley. The line extended first as far as Jamestown and from there branches extended it, on the one hand, past the historic mining town of Sonora to Tuolumne where lumbering was "king," and, on the other hand, across the steep canyon of the Stanislaus River to another well-known mining center, Angels Camp. Over the decades lumbering operations have remained the mainstay of the railroad, especially after World War I which brought a close to the gold mines. The construction of the Hetch Hetchy, the Goodwin (first named Melones), the Don Pedro, and other dams in the area supplemented business of the line greatly. The company used steam locomotives until 1955 when it converted to diesel power. It still maintains four of the old steamers, one of which, No. 3, is seen weekly by millions of Americans as the opener of a T-V program and frequently by other millions in movie houses throughout the land.

The author is at her best when she writes in interesting and great detail of the building of the line, especially of the obstacles in cutting through Table Mountain and bridging the Stanislaus River. She is also skillful in showing the impact of the railroad on the area, how it changed the established stage and wagon freight lines, and how it made lumbering possible. She has been influenced unduly, however, it appears, by the inaccurate and common view of the mining era; thus she occasionally romanticizes a bit about gun toting, gambling, and saloons. The reviewer's nerves were also jangled with some split infinitives, especially "to again financially back" (p. 103). Credit is due to the author, though, for her job in reconstructing the past of the Sierra Railway Company since its early records burned in 1913.

All in all the book has a great deal to offer: good reading, with no footnotes to bother the general reader; good viewing, with the remarkable quantity of one hundred thirty-six pages of illustrations; a history of a successful shortline; and insight into the impact of the "iron horse" in the southern Sierra Nevada Mountains.



"THE MARCH OF THE MONTANA COLUMN: A PRELUDE TO THE CUSTER DISASTER," by Lieut. James H. Bradley. Edited by Edgar I. Stewart. (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1961. xxv plus 182 pp., ill., map, introduction, index, \$4.00). Our reviewer is Robert W. Mardock of the College of Emporia, Emporia, Kansas, and a regular contributor to this department.

In 1876, James H. Bradley was a lieutenant in the Seventh Infantry (Ft. Shaw), six companies of which with four companies of the Second Cavalry (Ft. Ellis) made up the Montana Column. Commanded by Colonel John Gibbon, the Montana Column was one of three military forces moving to intercept the hostile Sioux thought to be in the southeastern Montana area. Bradley, a veteran of the Civil War and several western Indian campaigns, carefully recorded his observations and experiences during the Sioux Campaign. These detailed field notes provided much of the material for his Journal com-

piled shortly before he was ordered to participate in the Nez Perce campaign in 1877, and where he was killed in action.

First published in "Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana," Volume II (1896), Bradley's Journal is not a prosaic chronicle of day-to-day minutiae but a highly informative narrative of a military operation in enemy country, interspersed with vivid descriptions of the topography and history of the region traversed. The penetration of the column into hostile territory with the daily increasing evidence of Sioux warrior proximity and activity—once filching the horses of the column's Crow scouts—creates an element of suspense that reaches a climax in the last entry (July 26). Bradley, then in command of a scouting detachment some distance ahead of the column, was the first officer to hear the fate of Custer's Seventh Cavalry, recited by his horrified and sobbing Crow scouts. "It was a terrible, terrible story, so different from the outcome we had hoped for this campaign," noted Bradley and added, "the most I could do was to hope that in the terror of the three fugitives from the fatal field their account of the disaster was somewhat overdrawn. But that there had been a disaster—a terrible disaster—I felt assured." This was in dramatic contrast to the prevailing optimism expressed by Bradley five days earlier when Custer, with Terry and Gibbon, planned a combined movement against the Sioux encampment. "It is understood," commented Bradley then, "that if Custer arrives first, he is at liberty to attack at once if he deems prudent. We have little hope of being in at the death, as Custer will undoubtedly exert himself to the utmost to get there first and win all the laurels for himself and his regiment."

Besides furnishing a contemporary view of the Little Big Horn tragedy, Bradley's Journal provides a detailed description of one of the least known operations of the Sioux Campaign of 1876. The book is competently edited by Professor Edgar I. Stewart who also has included several photographs, drawings, and a map of the general area. It would be helpful to have a supplementary map of the southeastern Montana region indicating more explicitly the entire route of the Montana Column in that particular area and perhaps showing such additional movements as Bradley's scouting expedition to the Tongue River. This is my only criticism and a minor one, for in every way this volume is a well-done and valuable addition to the history of the American West.

"THE CIVIL WAR IN THE NORTH-WEST: NEBRASKA, WISCONSIN, IOWA, MINNESOTA AND THE DAKOTAS," by Robert Huhn Jones. (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1960. 216 pp., ill., maps, appendices, biblio., index. \$4.00). Dudley T. Cornish of Kansas State College in Pittsburg, Kas., is our reviewer. He is the author of *The Sable Arm*, an account of the Negro troops in the Civil War, and of several articles on Civil War subjects.

Among the flood of Civil War books appearing as the Centennial gathers momentum is an encouraging number of books on hitherto neglected areas of the war. This is such a book, treating the tangled problems of the northwestern frontier. Out there, no Confederate forces but other dangers threatened and occasionally struck. Technically this was no "civil" war, aside from the activities of a few Copperheads. What posed a real threat, however, were the Sioux Indians and their allies who rose up in the summer of 1862 and struck hard and savagely while the rest of the nation concentrated on Union forces in retreat from Second Bull Run. The two events seem remote from each other; this book demonstrates that they were related by more than an accidental time-factor. It shows in great detail the problems the Federal government faced in fighting a many-fronted war, a war none the less real because it was waged by painted Indians instead of butternut rebels.

This book also answers the question: whatever became of John Pope after his brief, unfortunate tenure as commander of the Army of the Potomac? Pope has fared poorly at historians' hands; Professor Jones suggests that he deserves a second look. For John Pope's war did not end in September, 1862, as his army straggled back toward Washington. War Department orders lifted him out of Virginia and shipped him west to cope with different problems: first, to put down the Indians and protect the extended frontier from further deprivations, and second, to administer a vast area in which communications were in a primitive state. Jones makes a good case for Pope, which suggests that it is time for a full-scale biography of that misunderstood and badly treated figure.

In somewhat confusing detail the book narrates the story of the Indian troubles and the campaigns led by Generals H. H.

Sibley and Alfred Sully to break Indian power in the Northwest. It is not a pretty story, but Pope emerges as a competent administrator handling delicate civil and military problems—Indians, conscription, and Copperhead activity—with considerable intelligence and success. He had no easy time of it: the Indian Bureau had its own methods, with most of which Pope could not agree; the War Department gave primary attention to defeating Confederate armies, and Pope got only left-overs. Typical are these excerpts, the first from Stanton to Halleck, the second from Halleck to Pope: ". . . whatever is sent to General Pope will leave a deficiency . . . in other branches" and "It will be impossible to give you all the supplies you ask for, but all that is possible will be done."

Considering the difficulties under which he labored, Pope did a commendable job; his performance as commanding general of the Department of the Northwest was rewarded in January of 1865 by appointment to command the Military Division of the Missouri combining the Departments of Missouri and the Northwest, with headquarters at St. Louis. This book, for all its tedious style, indicates what can be done in the way of departmental studies, an area of civil as well as military administration that deserves serious attention.

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**"THE SAND CREEK MASSACRE," by Stan Hoig.** (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, xiii plus 217 pp., ill., maps, biblio., index. \$4.00). Our reviewer is Michael Straight of Arlington, Va., author of the successful historical novel, *Carrington*, which appeared in 1959. He is currently writing a novel on the Sand Creek tragedy, the subject of the book which he reviews here.

There are many episodes in our past which we enshrine in our national tradition; others, such as Sand Creek, we prefer to forget. It was here, in 1864, that a regiment of Colorado militiamen surprised and slaughtered a band of Southern Cheyennes. The dead were mostly old men, women and children. The colonel who planned and directed the action was a wartime hero, a ranking Mason, a former minister of the Methodist Church.

Today, perhaps ninety-five out of a hundred Americans will rattle off the fable about George Washington and the cherry tree and shake their heads at the mention of Sand Creek. That is unfortunate. For the evil that was exposed at Sand Creek is present in some degree in all of us. And our belief that our nation was created without wrong-doing and is therefore morally superior to others, weakens us throughout the world.

So, if I had my way, the story of Sand Creek would be told in every school room; it would take its place in Fourth of July celebrations, along with Bunker Hill and Belleau Wood and Bastogne.

We have needed a standard work on Sand Creek, one that is thorough, sound and fair. No such study has existed until now. The raw material has been available in the yellowing pages of contemporary testimony, comment and autobiography. And many writers have attempted to add to this raw material the perspective of the historian. In general, they have failed. They have set out with the intention of observing detachment and restraint. But the material is such that before the first sentence is written detachment is scorned and restraint cast aside.

Mr. Hoig is aware of the danger. His first sentence is a warning to the reader that his subject is controversial. He adds that the controversy has been embittered by the partisanship of those who have written on Sand Creek since 1864. He sets out to avoid rancor, even to the point of



declining to correct the many misstatements that are contained in earlier books. He says of his own work: "This book attempts merely to trace the action and events, leaving the personal motivations to be questioned by others."

That is an admirable objective, and Mr. Hoig never loses sight of it. He begins by quoting William Bent's prophetic warning of 1859: "A desperate war of starvation and extinction is . . . imminent and inevitable unless prompt measures shall prevent it." He goes on to sort out the confusing series of raids and rumors which culminated in the Indian War of 1864. So he comes to the division in federal policy which followed Major Wynkoop's journey to the Big Timbers in September. From then on Wynkoop and Black Kettle maintained, between them, an armistice on the plains and held out the promise of peace. In contrast, in Denver, Chivington armed the militia and talked of extermination. At Sand Creek, the two approaches crossed: the attitude of trust which Wynkoop had instilled in the Cheyennes made it possible for Chivington to catch them unaware.

Mr. Hoig's description of the massacre which followed is like the rest of his book —sparse and restrained. He does not linger by the horrors of the scene: he does not permit his own feelings to intrude upon it. Yet he completes his assignment: fixing responsibility. He recalls the futile efforts of Bent to reason with Chivington. He quotes a neglected despatch from Major Anthony to General Curtis: "I told them (the Cheyennes) . . . that no war would be waged against them until your pleasure was heard." The dispatch was dated November 14; fifteen days later, Chivington, with Anthony at his side, came in stealth to Sand Creek, and so achieved what he described as "almost an annihilation of the entire tribe."

Mr. Hoig has written the standard work upon one of the most haunting episodes in our past. He has saved students and scholars months of research by setting forth all that is essential and verifiable in the story.

"SOUTH PASS, 1868. JAMES CHISHOLM'S JOURNAL OF THE WYOMING GOLD RUSH," edited by Lola M. Homsher. (Pioneer Heritage Series, Vol. III, published by the University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1960. 244 pp., \$4.50). This review is by Rodman Wilson Paul, professor at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena. Professor Paul, whose writings about western mining are familiar to most students in the field, is at present completing a new and more general study of mining frontiers in the American West.

This is a surprisingly good book on the mining west. Wyoming was hardly an important mining region, and the gold rush to South Pass was of brief duration and modest proportions. Yet this publishing of James Chisholm's diary of 1868 has proven to be a thoroughly worthwhile undertaking, because the journal itself is so perceptive, so vividly descriptive, so fluently written, and because the editor, Lola M. Homsher, has done such a remarkable job of editing. One might add that the publisher has given the book a very attractive appearance.

The editor, who is Director of the Wyoming State Archives, has an admirably perfectionist concept of editorial responsibilities. From manuscript census returns, local newspaper files, and local histories she has managed to identify virtually every proper name in the 150 pages of text. Species of wild berries, a peculiar fish, and innumerable colloquialisms are all carefully noted and explained. The life and character of James Chisholm and the reasons for his journey to Wyoming are described as fully as the surviving evidence permits. There are maps, sketches by Chisholm, a chronological outline of South Pass's history, and a glossary of mining terms. In short, this is as careful and thorough a piece of editing as one could ask.

As for the journal itself, it has the inherent weakness of dealing with a marginal mining region—one barely touched by a gold excitement of its own, one far better known as part of a route to far greater gold fields. Within these limits it has good descriptions of people, scenery, events, and emotions. Better still, it has excellent insights into the mentality of self-educated mining men and into the reasons why men once acclimated to the

frontier disliked returning to civilization. The miners Chisholm pictures, whether at work, in their cabins, or on a drunk, are real people whose habits and actions become understandable and interesting—not just quaint.

This is, therefore, a journal whose own strengths have been enhanced by intelligent editorial handling. Henceforth all of us will have to pay more attention to the Wyoming gold rush.



"PAWNEE, BLACKFOOT AND CHEYENNE, HISTORY AND FOLKLORE OF THE PLAINS FROM THE WRITINGS OF GEORGE BIRD GRINNELL," selected and with introduction by Dee Brown. (Charles Scribner's Sons, N. Y., 1961, xiii, 301 pp., \$4.95). W. N. Davis, Jr. of the California State Archives, reviews this new compilation of Grinnell writings.

George Bird Grinnell belongs to that top circle of writers who have made permanent contributions to the historical literature of the American West. His books and articles on the Plains Indians will be read as long as there is interest in the subject. Why will they survive? Because a rare union of times, conditions, and talents underlies their make-up and, of surpassing importance, depth of understanding characterizes their every line.

Grinnell, Yale '70, was the eastern gentleman of good connections for whom the West became an all-consuming, abiding interest. He was a great deal more than that, however, for he served the West and West's continuing values with devotion and success matched by few. That Glacier National Park has been called peculiarly his monument is enough to suggest his stature. Dee Brown's introduction sketches the high points of the great conservationist-naturalist's long career.

Grinnell first came west with Professor Marsh's geological expedition in 1870. He accompanied Custer as a naturalist on the Black Hills expedition in 1874, but was too busy to accept Custer's invitation in 1876. It was in the magazine "Forest and Stream," of which Grinnell was editor for 35 years, that he began to publish, in the

1880's, the folktales he had learned from the Plains Indians. The books on the Blackfeet, Pawnee, and, above all, the Cheyenne followed, the last one on Frank and Luther North and the Pawnee Battalion in 1928.

The book under review samples the various kinds of Grinnell's writings on the three tribes. For each there is a piece on Grinnell's personal experience with the tribe, an item or two on tribal history or social organization, and finally a number of folktales. The element that makes the accounts so valuable is that Grinnell, the trained and objective observer, lived with the Indians in their lodges, learned their languages, practiced their social ways, participated in their hunts, earned their respect and confidence including their adoption of him, and so came to know and understand them. Fortunately he was in time to witness the authentic Plains life before it vanished forever. Thus, independent of imaginative reconstructions, Grinnell wrote from personal experiences and directly from the immediate sources and authorities themselves.

Some of the features of the book, which will indicate why it is a good one for getting acquainted with the Plains Indians, are explanation and illustration of the intricate rules governing the counting of coup; the organization and operation of the buffalo hunt from initial religious rites to final surround; tribal and lodge life, including the elaborate code for routine conduct, the sharp distinctions between the economic vocations of men and women, child training, and the utterly public pattern of living; the enormous effect of the horse on the old way of life, transforming the Indian "from a mild and peaceful seeker after food to a warrior and a raider"; the ultimate personal quality of bravery. Grinnell shows that speech-making, storytelling, and conversation were the chief and highest form of tribal entertainment. Of the folktales, he published them just as they were told to him around the lodge fires. Some of them, the Pawnee tale, "The Dun Horse," for example, make good telling around the campfire today.

Grinnell's attitude toward the Indians, which is the key to the meaning of all that he wrote about them, he summed up in later years: "I have never been able to regard the Indian as a mere object for study—a museum specimen. A half-century spent in rubbing shoulders with them, during which I have had a share in almost every phase of their old-time life, forbids me to think of them except as acquaint-

ances, comrades, and friends. While their culture differs from ours in some respects, fundamentally they are like ourselves, except in so far as their environment has obliged them to adopt a mode of life and of reasoning that is not quite our own, and which, without experience, we do not readily understand." Cannot Westerners today, and all Americans for that matter, profitably take these lines as a subject of repeated reflection?

\* \* \*

## Books on the Review Editor's Desk . . .

By ROBERT G. ATHEARN

Delightful and refreshing, straight from the hands of an old "pro" among the writing mountain men, is Marshall Sprague's breezy *Newport in the Rockies*. It is sub-titled "The Life and Good Times of Colorado Springs." There is much life and good time to be had from this, the latest biography of a Colorado municipality. Lest anyone turn it aside at the local bookstalls on the ground that its scope is piddling and local, let him be advised here and now that he is missing a riotous account of the growing pains experienced by one of the Rocky Mountain West's most popular resort cities. It was more than just a place where tourists vacationed during the summer months; it was the home of railroad kings (General William J. Palmer and J. J. Hagerman are two examples), of mining magnates, and of frightfully wealthy sportsmen. "Li'l Lunnon," as it was called, was better known along the Thames than on the banks of the Potomac, and its story is far from that of "just another town." Westerner Alan Swallow, of 2679 South York Street, Denver 10, Colorado, is the publisher, and \$5.75 will buy a copy, colorful dust-jacket, excellent photos, maps, and all.

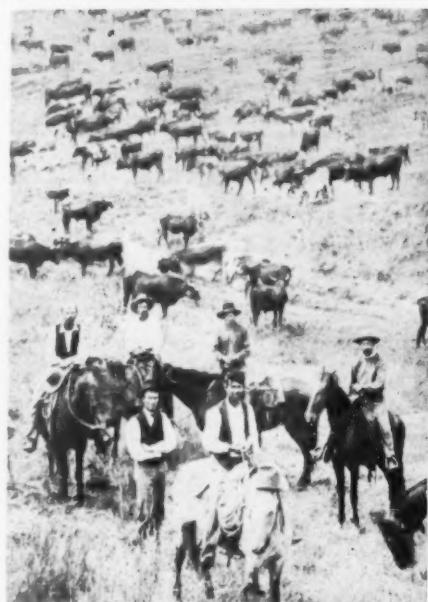
Montanans, in particular, will be interested in L. W. (Gay) Randall's *Footprints Along the Yellowstone*, published at San Antonio, Texas by the Naylor Company. It sells for \$4.95. The author is a native, born at Gardiner, Montana, son of the "father of Dude

Ranches." One of the chapters is called "How Dude Ranching Started," another it titled "Gardiner—Montana's unusual town." Others concern Indians, wild life, stories of early settlers and various bits of reminiscence of a folksy variety that make interesting reading.

Of a somewhat different nature is *The Whipple Report*. First published as Senate Executive Document 19 of the 31st Congress, 2d Session (1851), it describes an expedition undertaken from San Diego, California to the Rio Colorado in the fall of 1849, under the command of two lieutenants, Cave J. Couts and Amiel W. Whipple. The purpose of the undertaking was the running of a new international boundary line in the vicinity of the Gila and Colorado rivers in accordance with the terms of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo which concluded the Mexican war. It is now published by the Westernlore Press of Los Angeles, with an introduction by E. I. Edwards, author of such works as

*Desert Voices, The Valley Whose Name is Death* and *Lost Cases*. This item, number twenty in the Great West and Indian Series, sells for \$5.50.

Also documentary in nature is the Hafens' (LeRoy and Ann) *Powder River Campaigns and Sawyers Expedition* of 1865, published by Arthur H. Clark of Glendale, California. This volume of the Far West and the Rockies Historical Series (number 12) carries on the monumental work of the Utah historians and offers yet another contribution to both scholars and general writers of the American West. The book gives a detailed, personalized account of the 1865 campaign in the Powder River country aimed at quelling the Indians whose hell-raising proclivities were stimulated by the foolish Chivington affair in Colorado late in the preceding year. While it cannot be said that this makes hammock reading, the volume nevertheless is filled with highly informative material.



## The Cattle Kings

by LEWIS ATHERTON

A dramatic recreation of the days of the cattle kingdom—the men who made it colorful, the events that made it vital to the development of the West, and the stories that made it legendary—skillfully told by a renowned scholar, able to convey all the nostalgia and excitement of his subject. Every inch of the grand panorama is portrayed: everyday life on the ranches, the role of women, the social clubs, ranching as a business, the religion and education of the cattle region.

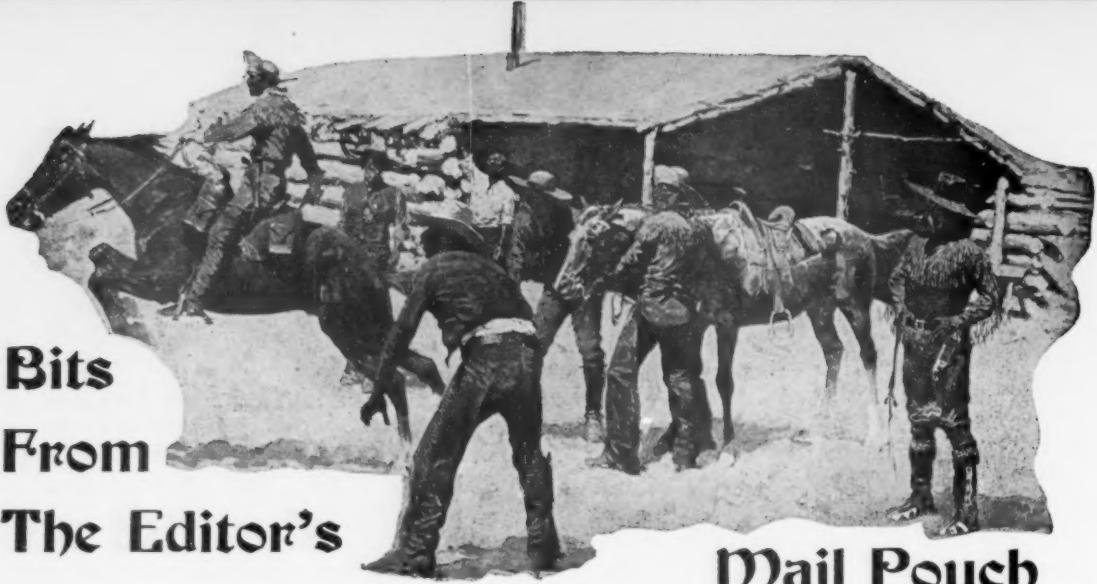
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320 pages

53 illustrations

\$6.95

coming November 17 from the Indiana University Press  
available through the Historical Society of Montana



## Bits From The Editor's

## Mail Pouch

### HOLE-IN-THE-WALL

"I read Helena Huntington Smith's article 'The Truth About the Hole-in-the-Wall' (Summer 1961) with a great deal of interest. The author's title irks me almost as much as do some of her character analyses and observations. And who has erred and just how much? Historically I suppose Mrs. Smith's facts . . . are correct, yet having been associated with Mrs. Joe LeFors, and the publishing of Lefor's memoirs, I cannot help championing his version—right or wrong. . . ."

Dean Krakel  
Gilcrease Institute of  
American History and Art  
P. O. Box 241  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

\* \* \*

"Just a few notes on 'The Truth About the Hole-in-the-Wall' article in the July issue. One might [add to the title of] this episode . . . the words 'as far as is known.' The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth was seldom known at the time an incident occurred. What may have been the grand finale to . . . Bob Divine's feud with part of the Hole-in-the-Wall gang . . . occurred in Frankie deBelloy's saloon in Camp Crook, S. Dak. 3 or 4 years later: One evening a man . . . by the name of Jennings walked into the saloon and was met by a six-shooter slug. He dropped in his tracks. The only action taken . . . was to drag the body aside, pull his boots off and put them under his head. The gambling and drinking went on . . . A former Texas cowboy, [Clem Hanson] then working for the CY (J. M. Carey and Sons) was arrested but CY cowboys donated to a kitty which freed the alleged killer. Stories circulated that involved others but no further arrests were made. The point I want to bring out was that the common talk, which is probably as near the truth as will ever be known, was that this gruesome killing was a continuation of the Hole-in-the-Wall battle and we hope its grand finale. . . ."

John O. Bye  
2743 N. E. 103rd  
Seattle 55, Wash.

\* \* \*

"I was pleasantly surprised to see my father's picture in your Summer (1961) issue of MONTANA under the story by Helena Huntington Smith. While I am not familiar with the 'Hole-in-the-Wall' story, I enjoyed it very much. I want to correct the initials of my father which were W. H. 'Billy' Smith instead of

W. D. I look forward to receiving each issue with its priceless illustrations and old time pictures."

Mrs. Ione Smith Manning  
Culbertson, Montana

\* \* \*

### FT. LARAMIE AND MR. SCHNYDER

"I enjoyed reading Harry Fine's article on Fort Laramie postal history in the last issue of your magazine. In the article he mentions that 'L. Schuyder' served as postmaster in 1865. Actually his name was Schnyder but Mr. Fine can't be blamed for this minor error as the misspelling appeared in the official 1865 register. Leodegar Schnyder is one of Fort Laramie's most interesting characters. Born in Sursee, Switzerland in 1813, Leodegar was a member of the first company to garrison Fort Laramie in 1849. In October, 1859, he was commissioned postmaster and served seventeen years. He left Fort Laramie in 1886, the longest residence on record. Unfortunately, he didn't keep a diary so little is known about him. Leodegar's job wasn't always an easy one. In 1864, for example, he had to compete with mail swindlers. John S. Collins, Fort Laramie sutler, tells of the swindle in his book *Across the Plains in '64* (Omaha, 1904). Upon reaching the North Platte River crossing a few miles from Fort Laramie, those who were traveling westward in 1864 discovered what they were led to believe was a post office. A shabby tent stood near the river bank and dangling from it was a sign which read 'Post Office—Letters to the States—50c.' Two men were on hand to greet the travelers, and soon the 'postmasters' were busy making up the mail for delivery. Suddenly in the distance, the travelers saw a rider approaching at great speed. After fording the river, the rider would gallop up to the tent, wet to the back, and shout, 'Can't wait' and 'Behind time,' etc. The postmaster would quickly hand him the mail bag and the rider would spur his horse toward the East as if his life depended upon it. When he was beyond the sight of the letter writers, the rider would slow down to a more leisurely pace and at the first opportunity dump the letters in the river. When another group of travelers came along, the 'play' was re-enacted. As Sergeant Schnyder put it, 'It was nothing but a damn swindle, but dey made a pushel of money mit it' (p. 22). By the way, the Sutler's Store which served as the post office in later years is scheduled for refurbishing and will be opened to the public in the summer of 1962."

John D. McDermott, Historian  
Ft. Laramie National Historic Site

## STILL-ACTIVE PIONEER

"What a wonderful magazine you are publishing and what a thrill to see it at our local newsstand! As I read it, I realized how much my father would enjoy it, so I mailed it to him. Later I decided that he would have so much to contribute to the magazine. My father, Edward P. Winterscheidt, better known as 'Doc' or 'Ed' Winters, spends most of his time now with his son, Lefty, and family at 2040 Johns Ave. in Butte. He is employed by the A.C.M. Co. and works every day in spite of his 78 years! He was born in Brown County, Kansas, on Nov. 9, 1883, and after his father's death in 1890, his mother brought him, a sister, May, and a brother, Ernest, to Denver and then to Newcastle, Wyo., where his mother operated a bakery. In 1892 he was sent to live with his aunt, Elizabeth Trompeter, in Edgemont, S. Dak., just 35 miles from the famous 999 Ranch on the Cheyenne. He tells about once having to ford the Cheyenne in a 'wagon bed' to escape the Sioux. He arrived in Butte just before the 1895 powder magazine explosion near the Great Northern Railway tracks. 1901 found him in Great Falls with W. S. Conrad and Conrad's two sons, Arthur and Hartfield. It was here that he 'swam' 450 bulls across the Sun River from the Floweree Ranch and then took them to Sweet Grass. Charlie Russell painted this scene, after which Dad and Mr. Russell were photographed together. In 1903



Dad went to work for Otto Gasser in Wisdom, Mont., and it was there that this picture was taken. Dad is about to mount his horse, and his companion is a young man to whom he had given a helping hand. He worked for a time at Lemhi Reservation, then returned to Great Falls. In 1905 he returned to Wisdom and worked for Gasser until 1907, when he drove stage coach for John P. Lassel of Wisdom. In Butte he married Mary Sarah Evans, and they raised five daughters and a son. Mother died in 1925. After raising his family, his main interest (aside from fishing the Madison and Big Hole) is nourishing and encouraging the education of his grandchildren. He is a man who loves Montana and because he has given his best to life, life has given its best to him."

Mrs. D. E. Howell  
413 Alameda St.  
Klamath Falls, Ore.

\* \* \*

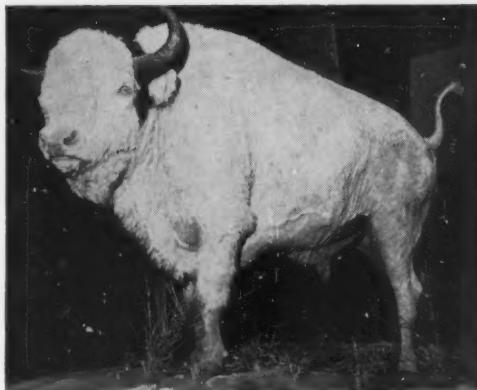
## C. M. RUSSELL RECORDS

"The Charles M. Russell records safely arrived. We all think you brought off a delightful scoop with these. The covers alone are worth going into raptures over, to say nothing of the songs. I had the mailman stop on his rounds to hear them and the neighbors have been in. Glad these people know of C. M. R. now . . ."

D. E. Wilson  
36 Homersham Road  
Surrey, England

AUTUMN, 1961

## Big Medicine Comes Home From the Hills

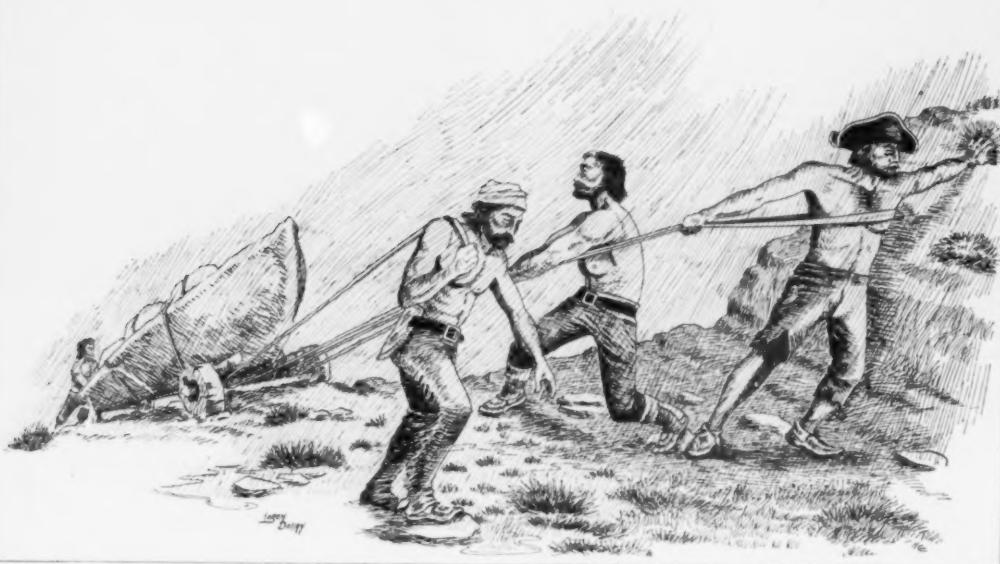


Now permanently enshrined in the Historical Society of Montana museum is the famed white buffalo, Big Medicine, who died in 1959 after a long life. He spent 26 years (comparable to 80 in a human) at the Moiese (U. S. Bison Range) in Western Montana. In the lifelike pose, seen here, the shaggy old ruminant now attracts even more attention than he did in life, although he was said to have been the most photographed bison in American history. Big Medicine was not a true albino, because of the knob of natural brown hair between his horns and his blue eyes and light-colored hoofs, but he was one of the rarest of our native animals (only one in 5,000,000 births, says Hornaday). Held sacred, as were all white buffalo by the Plains Indians, this unusual display becomes one of Museum Land's most priceless assets, and a Montana object of incalculable appeal for generations to come, according to Director Michael Kennedy.



## THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION—One of A Series by Loren Dollar.

JUNE 21 - JULY 15, 1805 - THE EXPEDITION'S PORTAGE AROUND THE GREAT FALLS WAS A PERIOD OF HARD WORK. CRUDE TRUCK FRAMES WERE CONSTRUCTED TO HAUL THE DUGOUTS AND GEAR OVER A DISTANCE OF 18 MILES. THE MEN PUT ALL THEIR EFFORT INTO THIS LABOROUS TASK OF HAULING TREMENDOUS LOADS OVER CACTUS COVERED TERRAIN. SUDDEN RAIN AND HAIL STORMS ADDED TO THEIR MISERY.



### HENRY BIERMAN

"I was very much interested in the story of Henry Bierman's life (Winter 1961), as I am one of the Van Wagner children mentioned therein, and it was my mother that took Ida Bierman at five days old and kept her for six years. I was just one year old at that time and Ida's mother was my mother's sister. Our pioneer life at Kalispell was also quite hectic and maybe some day I will write a story about it too."

Mrs. Florence Landon  
P. O. Box 101  
Brownsville, Ore.

\* \* \*

### MISCELLANY

"I am from Red Lodge and the current issue (Summer 1961) holds extra charm for old Montanans . . . The article on Bishop Brewer was (also) of great interest to me. He confirmed my mother and also . . . me and was a good friend of our family from Virginia City days and later in Red Lodge. I can still hear him pronounce the word 'Montana' . . . Your wonderful magazine means a great deal to me and to my husband, a Montanan by adoption, with many relatives in Butte and Billings areas in the good old days of the pioneers!"

Mrs. Don Sanford  
Box 172  
Freeland, Mich.

\* \* \*

### FT. UNION RESTORATION

"Enclosed find payment for a copy of the index of past issues of MONTANA . . . I am looking forward to some issues relating to the first fort established in Montana . . . in 1823, if I recall right, at the junction of the Yellowstone and Missouri. As advisor to the

Missouri River Confluence Commission . . . working to restore old Fort Union, I am happy to report that our National Government has approved such restoration . . . The Commission is attempting to gather all material and relics and asks the support of the public in gathering material in private possession. (Those having) such material and relics must have names displayed on or beside the material (and may) contact LaVern C. Neff, Williston, N. Dak. or R. N. Nutt, Sidney, Mont. . ."

H. B. Syverud  
Dagmar, Montana



". . . I was introduced to MONTANA magazine several years ago through my father-in-law, the late Dr. Roy J. W. Ely, former director of the School of Economics, Montana State University. From the first issue I saw, I was extremely interested, and continue to be so, in Montana history. I think your magazine is the finest historical publication I have ever seen. . ."

James E. Hannigan  
Flight Test Engineer  
U. S. Air Force  
Fort Walton Beach, Florida

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 Greeting is a sincere and appropriate verse



**L1503** **Winter Friends**  
 Season's Greetings and Best Wishes for the New Year



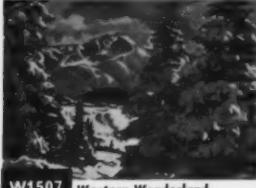
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**W1507** **Western Wonderland**  
 Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



**L1508** **A Western Santa**  
 Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



**L1509** **Navajo Weaver**  
 With Best Wishes for a Happy Holiday Season



**L1510** **"And Behold, The Star—"**  
 With Best Wishes for the Season and Happiness throughout the Coming Year



**L1511** **Competition**  
 Best Wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



**D1512** **Main Street Music**  
 A very Merry Christmas and Best Wishes in the Coming Year



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**L1515** **A Christmas Visit**  
 Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



**L1516** **Thinkin' of you at Christmas**  
 Best Wishes for the Holidays and Happiness throughout the New Year



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# Gold On The Hoof



RIDERS OF THE OPEN RANGE

WHAT CATTLE meant to development of the West is generally recognized. The color, drama and tragedy are all touched upon in this issue. But the present-day impact of cattle is often overlooked. According to figures provided by the Montana Stockgrowers Association, cattle-raising in Montana is today a billion dollar industry. It provides gainful employment for 15,000 Montanans with an \$11,000,000 annual payroll. Montana cattlemen pay some \$10,000,000 annually in property taxes. Even today, 60 per cent of all Montana is pasture or rangeland, generally unusable for anything except livestock production. The fact that Montana makes much beef for a nation of beef-eaters is generally known; how significant beef is in making Montana's economy strong is not often calculated.

AS LEADERS interested in developing and expanding this great, surging, rawboned region, we are delighted to call your attention to both the historic richness as well as the continuing economic significance of the livestock industry. The louder the hoofbeats are heard in these parts, the greater grow the other sounds of industry. We are pleased to join hands with the men who wear boots and sombreros, whose heritage, hopes and aspirations constitute a monument to our national well-being...

Reber Plumbing & Heating Co., Helena and Great Falls — Montana Bank, Great Falls  
Mountain States Telephone and Telegraph Co. — Great Falls Breweries, Inc.  
Frontier Town at McDonald Pass — Great Falls Poster — Foote Outdoor, Inc., Billings  
Treasure State Life Insurance Company — Northern Pacific Railway Company  
Montana Power Company — McKee Printing Co. — Great Northern Railway Company

